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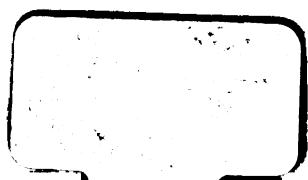
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# **THE LAND OF TOMORROW**

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**WILLIAM B. STEPHENSON, JR.**

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**THE BEAUTIFUL ALASKAN SUMMER**

# THE LAND OF TOMORROW

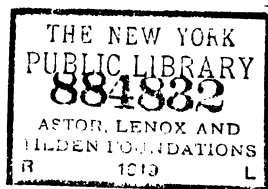
BY  
**WILLIAM B. STEPHENSON, JR.**  
FORMERLY UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER IN ALASKA



ILLUSTRATED

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**TO MY MOTHER**  
**ALICE HERSHEY STEPHENSON**  
**WITH GREATEST DEVOTION**

B.T., July 14/19





## FOREWORD

**T**HAT the Voice of the North calls insistently to him who once has dwelt amidst its snows is neither myth nor legend. It is history. Like the Song of the Lorelei, having heard it once it rings in his ears forever. True, it is a strenuous game which Man plays against Nature in Alaska. There, as nowhere else on earth, he pays the price for what he gets. Yet if you ask one who has loved and left her, one who has lived among her mountains, experiencing alike the bitter winter and the wondrous Alaskan summer, every day of which is perfect beyond the power of words to describe, even though he may deny the call it is not difficult to detect the hidden longing underlying his reply. For it is a fact not to be gainsaid that after such an experience, no matter how much a man may have looked forward to a life of ease after his return, he seldom finds it satisfying. Usually when he goes back home it is to find his old friends scattered or dead. The old pleasures turn to gall and wormwood in his mouth. In time the jar and turbulence of cities get on his nerves. He begins to hear the Voice! The old residents of Alaska, they who have lived

there so long that they seem a part of the land itself, always smile grimly when they hear a man begin to curse the land where he has made his wealth and swear that he never wants to see it again. To them it is an old story. They have seen many return to the regions whence they came. And they have seen most of them come back! They alone know the truth of the line from the old Norse legend:

*"Dark and true and tender is the North!"*

Following the opening up of the gold fields much was written of Alaska, but it was confined largely to the territory of the Yukon and the unsettled, chaotic conditions of the hour. The fortunate few who, through the medium of poem, song or story, have revealed the glories and the tragedies of this part of the country have done their work well. The record of that now-historic stampede to the Klondike gold fields has journeyed to the uttermost parts of the earth. But all this was twenty years ago. The Alaska of to-day is not what it was then, and there are sections of this marvelous country which no artist has yet painted and of which no poet has yet sung. Were this not true the present scribe would have no task,—no reason for adding to the list.

Sixty miles north of the mouth of the Yukon lies the little island of St. Michael on which the writer spent five years (first as manager of the Pacific Cold Storage Plant and afterward as United States Commissioner), journeying later from this island to almost every spot in the country which the white man has yet penetrated. Moved by the astonishing discovery during a recent visit to the States that there is practically nothing to be had in any library in regard to this island, so important a connecting link between the Yukon and the outer world, he is inflicting this little volume upon a patient and long-suffering public. He has been moved to do this, not from a desire to pose as a creator of literature, but because of a belief which can not be shaken that Alaska is *The Land of Tomorrow!* It is the only bit of Uncle Sam's territory where it is still possible for a man to get in on the ground floor. Now that the great World War is at an end thousands of soldiers are coming home again—to begin life over! They will be seeking a new environment. Travel, especially by water, even though (as is the case with those lately in the service) it be under difficulties and not always of one's own choosing, never fails to breed *wanderlust* in man. It awakens something within him which urges him to go adventuring, to seek

the far spaces of the world, no matter how much his heart may cry out to him to stay at home. In Alaska there is room for all who know how to fight! Untold opportunity for him who is willing to fight! With a physique made strong by the life in the trenches, with muscles hardened by military training, the returned soldier will be fitted as he never has been before and perhaps never will be again to cope with the somewhat rigorous life demanded of him who dwells "north of fifty-three."

Alaska is calling for men,—men to cultivate her farms, to develop her mines, to build her railroads, to man her fisheries and her lumber camps. She will soon be asking for business men to manage her stores, for lawyers, doctors and dentists, for teachers, ministers and priests, for actors and motion picture operators. In another year Uncle Sam's great railroad will be running Pullman cars across this sparsely-settled country. This means progress. Alaska will begin to live. She will prove a good although at certain seasons of the year a frigid mother to thousands yet unborn. The homely old proverb in regard to the early bird is peculiarly applicable to Alaska. The worm is only waiting to be caught.

To know Alaska is to love her. As one old North-Pacific sea captain once put it,—“A man

can get along without the woman he loves if he has to. But he can't get along without Alaska after he has fallen in love with her!"

It is Robert Service, however, who in *The Spell of the Yukon* has breathed the real spirit of the land:

"Some say God was tired when He made it;  
Some say it's a good land to shun;  
May be. But there's some as would trade it  
For no land on earth—and I'm one!"

W. B. S.

St. Michael, Alaska.



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# **THE LAND OF TOMORROW**



# THE LAND OF TOMORROW

## CHAPTER I

### NORTHWARD HO!

**M**EMORY, with unerring exactitude, carries me back to a never-to-be-forgotten day,—the twenty-ninth of May, 1909,—the day on which I sailed from Seattle on the S. S. *St. Croix* to take charge of the plant of the Pacific Cold Storage Company at St. Michael, Alaska. In my early manhood I had studied law, but the years immediately preceding this date I had spent among the great forests of British Columbia in charge of the interests of the British Columbia Tie and Timber Company. It was a life which appealed to me,—one which I loved and had planned to follow during my working years. But man proposes! And that inexplicable thing for which we have no definite name,—call it fate, fortune, destiny, or what you will—often disposes! Some sudden and utterly unfore-

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seen event, almost in the twinkling of an eye, will change the whole current and meaning of a man's life. Such an experience was mine. So, like Columbus of old, I set forth once more upon the uncharted sea of life in search of a new world.

The last decade has brought about marvelous improvement in travel northward. Most ocean voyages are eventful and mine was particularly so. Therefore it may not be amiss to begin with it. At that time sailing to Alaska was unlike voyaging to any other part of the world. Man knew not whither he was going or whether he would return. The air of mystery which broods ever over all the northland seems to cast a spell upon the traveler from the moment of starting. Once there, the Land of Silence wraps her arms about him and holds him close, sometimes absorbing him!

There are two routes by which one may make his way northward. One is by what is known as the Inside Channel, by far the more beautiful and diverting and carrying him into the heart of the Yukon territory. The other is the Outside Passage and bears him directly across to the Alaskan Peninsula and thence around the coast to Nome. It was the latter route which I took on my first voyage to Alaska.

No man can see the lights of Victoria or Van-

couver fade behind him without a feeling that he is standing in the dawn of a new life. Behind him lies the known; ahead, the unknown! From Vancouver to Skagway, up the Inside Channel, is a wonderful journey of a thousand miles, and as the boats pull away from shore one sees lying to right of him the mainland of British Columbia and to the left the island which bears the name of that intrepid explorer who navigated the then unknown waters of the North Pacific and charted them. Those who now journey northward will never realize their debt to Captain Vancouver. To the land-lubber the journey up the Channel seems fraught with a thousand dangers. But not so. Not a sunken rock but this old sea-dog has charted it, and the vessels thread their way with the utmost safety through a perfect maze of islands. To realize the miracle of this thousand miles of tangled maze one has but to stand in the bow of the boat and attempt to pick out the channel through which it will pass. He will guess wrong every time. One can not distinguish the isles from the shore. The mountains crash skyward, seemingly from the very deck of the vessel itself. But the inexperienced can not tell whether they crown an island or are on the mainland. The tourist gazes with admiration, not unmixed with awe, at the countless little bays



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and straits through which the boats twist, turn, creep forward and oftentimes turn backward! And so it is until the thousand miles of water, with its fairy islands and its gigantic icebergs lie far behind him,—a part of that past upon which he has turned his back.

The journey of the *St. Croix* (making the *outside* trip) was uneventful until we reached Cape Flattery. Here we encountered a terrific storm from the northwest. For a couple of days we had had a feeling that the glorious Pacific was in one of her sullen moods. It began with a gray sea and a few flying clouds. Followed a head wind which knocked fifty miles off the day's run and then,—a real storm, a miniature hurricane. It continued with unabated violence until we were within a day's run of Unimak Pass, at the foot of the Alaskan Peninsula. For six days we had sailed straight across the ocean to northwest, seeing nothing but sky and water,—huge, mountain-like waves which rose and fell with monotonous regularity. When we reached this point, however, we had a little diversion. Great numbers of walrus were splashing about in the water and lying on the ice. Here, also, I saw the first whales I had ever seen.

One of the sights of this ocean voyage is Mt. Shishaldin, an active volcano nearly nine thou-

sand feet high and located about thirty miles east of Unimak Pass. In symmetry and in the beauty of its curves it rivals Fujiyama, the sacred mountain of Japan. No geographer has ever visited Mt. Shishaldin. No man has yet ascended it. Unimak, the island on which it stands, is a continuation of the Alaskan Peninsula, being separated from it only by a narrow strait. Like the rest of the Aleutian chain, it lies between Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

It was about three o'clock in the morning of June ninth that we sighted the volcano. Scarcely any one on board had retired, as none wished to miss the view of the mountain. It is safe to say that none regretted the loss of sleep. It was a sight long to be remembered. Directly over the smoking cone the early-morning sun, dark red of hue, was slowly rising. The effect was most spectacular and—symbolic! No work of the Master's hand so symbolizes life as do the mountains. No matter how dark the vales and cañons, on the heights there is always light!

It was shortly after we entered the Pass that our journey began to afford us excitement. Here we encountered the first large ice floes and caught between them were many vessels,—the *Ohio*, *Senator*, *Victoria*, *Olympia* and *Mackinac* being plainly visible. Each was trying to find a pas-

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sage through the ice and it was most amusing to see the grim smile which came over the face of our own Captain W—— when he saw their predicament. It is considered quite an honor to bring the first boat through the ice in the spring. No wonder, then, that the Captain was pleased. All these boats had sailed from one to three days ahead of us. Now the *St. Croix* had an equal chance with the rest.

At about half speed we started to plow through the ice. We made about fifty miles. Then the ice became much thicker and more difficult to penetrate. Many times we came to a standstill. Then we would back up some eight or nine hundred feet and at full speed would go ahead again, ramming the ice with all possible force. It was necessary to hold on to the rail in order to keep one's feet.

Now, this sort of thing may be interesting for a certain length of time, but when it becomes continuous one's interest flags! Operations were suspended for thirty minutes three times a day while meals were served, but except for these intervals, it went on night and day. I say night and day, but it was principally day. At this time of year there was only about one hour of the twenty-four when one could not see to read in his state-room without the electric light.

On the morning of June eleventh I was awakened by a terrific crash. I heard the swift scampering of feet along the deck toward the bow. I dressed as quickly as possible and hurried forward. We had bumped squarely into a young iceberg at full speed and had smashed our bow stem. This meant that we were caught in the ice floe with no means of getting out! We could no longer ram the ice with the ends of the planking exposed. It further developed that the owners had neglected to equip the boat with material necessary for repairs. But the Captain realized the necessity of doing *something*, so, in his dilemma, he ordered some of the steerage bunks torn up in order to get two by four lumber with which to patch the bow. It was wasted effort. The material was too light to be serviceable. It did not last as long as it took to put it on. One bump finished it.

There was among the passengers a ship-builder named Trahey. Being a practical individual, he suggested chaining the anchor across the bow and ramming the ice with it. This seemed to be all right, and we were beginning to think that our troubles were over, but all of a sudden we struck an ice floe about thirty feet thick. The anchor slid up the side and tore out the planking. The Captain (and the rest of us as well) saw that he

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was up against it. The boat began to take water. We all realized that the situation had become serious.

Presently the click-click of the wireless was heard. Calls for help were sent immediately. The first response was from the S. S. *Thedias*. She replied that she was stuck in the ice off Nome and could render assistance to no one. The second response was from the *Corwin*. She lay off St. Michael. She refused to come to our aid for less than six thousand dollars, which terms Captain W——, evidently valuing our lives at nothing, refused to accept. We carried no freight. Already the meals on the boat were getting poor, but at the moment no one was troubled with a large appetite! The Captain would give out no information as to his intentions, but it chanced that one of the passengers, an old friend of mine, a former Passenger Agent for the Santa Fe railroad, had been a telegraph operator and he kept me informed as the wireless messages broke over the antenna.

In our helpless condition we began to drift toward the Arctic Ocean at the rate of four miles an hour and we could not keep our minds from reverting to the tragic experience of the *Portland* which only a few years previously had floated about the Polar Sea all summer. It is needless

to say that there was little sleep on the *St. Croix* that night. I retired at eleven-thirty but was up again at four and entertained myself by watching the seals and walruses playing near the boat.

We spent the next day, June twelfth, wondering what was to become of us, but as is usually the case in such crises, after the first shock is over one becomes philosophical about most things,—even the imminence of death. No man in his right mind really fears death. But the sudden realization that all one's plans have come to naught, that one shall never realize his cherished dreams, the thoughts of loved ones far away,—it is these and kindred things which make of it the staggering proposition that it is. So the men on board realized the necessity of keeping a stiff upper lip. We tried to make the others believe that we were cheerful, and although none of us could stifle his vague uneasiness we managed to keep it out of sight. In the afternoon a party of us got out on the ice, chose sides and had a snow-ball battle. It helped us to forget the seriousness of our plight and to amuse those who watched from the boat. By nightfall we had drifted as far north as latitude sixty-four, a few miles south of Nome. But—we danced on deck

until two in the morning, the thirteenth day of June.

I have always scouted the prevailing notion that there is any bad luck connected with the number thirteen! I had no more than fallen asleep when I was awakened by the jar of the machinery. My first thought was that the Captain had decided to make a final attempt to buck the ice and I was confident that this could have but one result,—the wrecking of the boat. I dressed immediately and went on deck, only to come face to face with another of those mysterious twists of fortune which oftentimes in an instant turn danger to safety and just as frequently make of apparent surety a disaster. Right ahead of us, as far as the eye could see, was an open channel, straight as a die and just a little wider than the boat!

All was activity now. It seemed only a moment until we were under way. Once started we forged ahead with all possible speed in order that we might get out of the ice pack before the channel should close again. Luck favored us. A few hours later we landed at Nome. There was no coal to be had here and as we had only enough for twelve hours, after unloading the passengers the *St. Croix* headed immediately for St. Michael. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the

*thirteenth* day of June, I reached my destination.

No steamers can land at the island. Both passengers and freight have to be lightered ashore. The inner bay was filled with ice. We anchored five miles out. I went ashore with a friend in his gasoline launch which had been sent out for him. We left the *St. Croix* at two-thirty, and we had to get out several times and pull the boat along the ice until we could launch her again in open water. At seven o'clock we reached the beach. I stepped ashore and took a look at what was to be my abiding-place for the next five years. Home was never like this! I was informed that the largest building in sight was the Steamboat Hotel. I took my way thither and was the sole occupant of this now-historic hostlery for more than a week.



## CHAPTER II

### THE LAND OF TOMORROW

**T**HE writer lays no claim to being an historian, but a word in regard to Alaska's early history and how the country came to be a part of our national possessions may not be amiss.

When the Russians first came to the island of Unalaska they learned from the natives there of a vast country lying to eastward, the name of which was *Alayeksa*. Their own island, one of the Aleutian group, they called *Nagun-Alayeksa*, which means "the land next to *Alayeksa*." As is usually the case, especially in primitive languages, the word was gradually modified and in time it assumed three different forms. The Russians called the country itself *Alashka*. The peninsula became *Aliaska*, the island *Unalaska*. In English the word changed once more to the present name, *Alaska*, which means "The Great Country." It is a fitting name. All honor to those two good Americans, Seward and Sumner, who in the teeth of the most withering scorn, ridicule, and even opprobrium, saved for our coun-

try her most glorious and valuable possession,—the land discovered and partly explored by Vitus Bering in 1741.

The old saying that “Westward the star of empire takes its way” is not applicable to Alaska. She enjoys a reputation wholly unique in the history of nations. She is the only country acquired by any European power in America because of expansion *eastward*. The territory which lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River was our inheritance from the mother country. The two Floridas, Texas, New Mexico, and California we acquired, either directly or indirectly, from Spain. From France we purchased Louisiana. But about the middle of the sixteenth century there began in Russia a movement eastward similar to that which followed (westward) the American Revolution in our own country.

It was shortly after the overthrow of the Tartars and the establishment of a national monarchy. But there was as much difference between the motives underlying the westward movement in our country and the eastward movement in Russia as there was in the character of the pioneers who made them and the results which followed. The American pioneer was either a fur trader, a prospector, a hunter, a mis-

sionary, a soldier, or a farmer seeking land on which to settle. The Russian pioneer was usually either a fugitive from justice or a proved criminal who had been punished by exile to the vast wilderness which lay beyond the confines of the empire.

Commercial and military motives exist in all countries, however, and in this case both operated. The exigencies of commerce carry men to the far corners of the earth. The trade in furs had long been a leading industry in Russia. So as soon as it became known that the countries east of the Russian empire were rich in fur-bearing animals, particularly the highly-prized sable, the merchants at once sat up and took notice! They hastened to extend their trade eastward as rapidly as the country could be made Russian territory. So the Cossacks, pressing ever onward, at last reached the Straits. Eastward through Siberia, into Alaska they came for this purpose. Here they found not only furs but huge quantities of ivory which was embedded in the drift along the seacoast and the rivers.

It was during the reign of Peter the Great,—a reign which was significant for many reasons. He it was who was responsible for the promulgation of comprehensive exploring plans which resulted in the discovery of Alaska. He fitted

out an exploring party under command of Vitus Bering, a Dane, who was accompanied by a Russian navigator named Chirikof. The story of Bering's exploration is now too well known to need elaboration here. On the morning of July sixteenth, 1741, Bering records that he "came in sight of a rugged coast, presenting a vast chain of mountains and a noble peak wrapped in eternal snows." This was Mt. St. Elias.

For some reason which seems unaccountable and has never been explained, Bering did not stop at this time for further exploration. Instead, he set sail for home to report his discovery. He never reached Russia, however. His boat, the *St. Peter*, was wrecked off a small island not far from Kamchatka, where, on December eighth, 1741, the commander died. He had discovered, explored, and named many of the small islands, but his crew had suffered miserably from scurvy. Many had died. The rest remained for nine months upon the little island which now bears the commander's name,—Bering Island. The other boat, commanded by Chirikof, had also a tragic experience. This navigator discovered the coast of Alaska not far from Sitka. In an attempt to land ten of his men were lost. A rescuing party sent in search of them met the same fate. Both were victims

of the cannibalistic residents of the coast. They were sacrificed by the Kolosh Indians. A second rescuing party went after the others but just as they neared the shore a party of natives, looking as innocent as the cat who has eaten the canary, suddenly appeared upon the bank. The little boat load of rescuers stood not upon the order of their going. Regarding discretion as the better part of valor, they turned and fled. A few months later, haggard and famished, the remnant of the crew landed at Kamchatka.

Followed the long years of controversy in regard to trading privileges, but in time these were, in a manner, adjusted. A hundred and sixty-eight years later the United States added one more chapter in the history and growth of our national interests on the Pacific. She acquired Alaska. Beginning in Oregon, extending next to California, where they received their most powerful impetus, these interests have gradually increased to gigantic proportions. The markets of the Orient became alluring. The Pacific railways were constructed. Not to have profited by Russia's willingness to dispose of Alaska would have been madness.

Perhaps the story (vouched for by Charles Sumner) of how the purchase came about may also be of interest. It was during the adminis-

tration of President Buchanan, in 1859. An unofficial representative of the President sounded the Russian minister as to the willingness of his government to sell Alaska. Being asked quickly what the United States would pay, the unofficial representative (who had not given the subject serious consideration and who, if he had done so, would have had no authority to answer such a question) was a bit nonplussed for the moment. But he sent out a feeler by saying suggestively, "Oh,—about five million dollars."

He saw at once that he had made an impression. He hastened to the assistant Secretary of State and reported the affair to him. The latter then approached the Russian minister, with the result that the matter was brought definitely before the government. But——. The Civil War broke out. And for the next six years there was no talk of buying anything! During these years, however, the people of what is now the State of Washington, along Puget Sound, had become deeply interested in the fisheries. In 1866, through their legislature, they petitioned the President of the United States to obtain for them from the Russian government permission to fish in Alaskan waters, asking also for a more complete exploration of the Pacific coast fisheries from "Cortez Bank to Bering Sea." It was this

petition which revived the discussion in regard to the purchase of Alaska.

Fortune favored the project. As was the case with Napoleon, when he agreed to the sale of the Louisiana territory, Russia, bled by one war and already preparing for another, in danger of losing those of her possessions which had been threatened by the British navy during the Crimean war, the Russian-American Fur Company not disposed to accept such modifications of its charter as the government saw fit to grant, empowered the Archduke Constantine, brother of the Czar, to instruct the Russian minister at Washington to cede the territory of Alaska to the United States. Within a month all arrangements were complete. The treaty was signed March thirtieth, 1867. The price at first agreed upon was seven million dollars, but William H. Seward, Secretary of State, offered to increase this amount by two hundred and fifty thousand dollars on condition that Russia cede the territory "unencumbered by any reservations, privileges, franchises, grants or possessions by associated companies . . . Russia or any other. . . ."

It seemed for a while that there would be a hitch in the negotiations due to the protest made by the Hudson Bay Company against this latter demand. But Seward stood firm. He insist-

ed, wisely, upon this condition and secured it. Upon the entrance of the United States into the game the Hudson Bay Company retired permanently from the scene.



## CHAPTER III

### ST. MICHAEL

**I**T is only when one ventures forth upon so large a subject that he realizes how inadequate, how incomplete the result must be even after he has done his best. He may just as well acknowledge his shortcomings in the outset and crave his readers' indulgence. It is the truth that there is no man living who can or has the right to attempt to speak of Alaska as a whole. A man might travel continuously for a whole year, using every means of expedition at his command, not wasting a day anywhere, journeying by land or sea, in winter and summer, taking advantage of the "last ice" and the "first water," and yet he could not begin to cover the country. In the far-distant corners, hidden away from the eyes of man, one will come upon the scattered missions of the various churches to reach which one must journey thousands of miles! So, whenever a man from Nome speaks of Alaska he means that part of it which he himself knows, —the Seward Peninsula. The man from Cor-

dova, or Valdez, talks of the Prince William Sound country and calls it Alaska! The man from Juneau speaks of Alaska, but all that he means is the southeastern coast. This is why so much that is written of the country is contradictory. In fact, Alaska is not one but many countries! And the various parts differ radically from each other. Nature has separated them each from the other by obstacles almost insuperable. They have different interests, different problems. Their climate is not the same, nor their resources, nor their population. Thus what is true of one part of Alaska may be (and often is) absurdly untrue of another part.

Because much of my own experience here has centered about St. Michael and because the little island is so large a part of the country's fragmentary history I am indulging myself in the pleasure of telling her story. When the Russian-American company was under the administration of that able and high-minded official, Baron von Wrangell, Michael Trebenkoff was sent out to establish a trading-post on Norton Sound. In 1833 he built Redoubt St. Michael, putting it under the protection of his patron Archangel. It was the second Russian port on Bering Sea, Nu-shayak, in Bristol Bay, having been founded in 1818.

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It is a quaint, historic little island, about twenty-two miles long and six miles wide. It has one mountain, an extinct volcano, in the center and is separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. The latter was utterly useless for shipping, and a few years ago the government spent quite an amount of money widening and improving it in order that, by its use, the worst part of the sea voyage from St. Michael to the Yukon river might be avoided. But it was misdirected effort. The boats do not use it because of its narrowness. The canal, at the mouth of which is a beacon, leads by a wandering course into St. Michael's Bay. I one day asked Captain Polte, an old officer of one of the vessels, why the canal was not used. "Well," he replied laconically, "we can't use it when it's windy and when there's no wind we don't need it!" Reason enough.

Some of the old log buildings on St. Michael still stand, mute reminders of the day when the little island belonged to Russia. On a point of rock one may still see the small octagonal block house inside of which the diminutive but still-defiant rusty cannon arouse the interest of all visitors. In the stormy pioneer days, so we are told, these little six-pounders more than once proved effective when the post was in danger. They



**THE AUTHOR DRESSED FOR THE TRAILS AT  
KOTLICK, MOUTH OF THE YUKON**



**AN ISLAND ON WHICH IS LOCATED ONE OF THE FINEST  
FOX FARMS IN ALASKA**



**NEARLY TWENTY THOUSAND FURS READY FOR SHIPMENT**

were considered sufficiently historic to be exhibited at the Seattle Exposition in 1909.

This is neither the time nor the place to record the story of the Klondike stampede, but that part of it which affected the island may be here related. When almost in the twinkling of an eye the desolate coast of Bering Sea became a veritable highway of nations, when all the available shipping facilities of the Pacific coast were soon exhausted, when ships from the Atlantic began coming around the Horn, when every part of the Pacific began to hum with Alaskan business,—the tide of traffic found it necessary to separate. One part of it sailed through the Inside Passage to Skagway. The other took the Outside Passage and entered through St. Michael. It is not a very convenient port, it is true, but it is the best there is. To St. Michael came all the heavy merchandise, the immense stocks of goods for trading and for individual use. This port thus became the gateway to the fabulously rich gold fields of the Yukon. St. Michael is, therefore, a large part of the history of the Klondike stampede.

The White Pass and Yukon Company is a transportation company which has operated for several years on the Yukon with headquarters at Dawson, Yukon Territory. This company believed that the best method of shipping supplies

to Alaska would be to bring them in by way of Skagway, then over the White Pass and Yukon Railroad to Dawson, transferring them there to the White Pass boats and barges and floating them thence *down* the river to points in the interior. The Northern Navigation Company brought its freight to St. Michael by way of the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. It was then loaded on boats and barges and pushed *up* the river. What was a disadvantage to the White Pass people was a distinct advantage to the Northern Navigation Company. This was the fact that the lower part of the Yukon River below Lake Lebarge was free from ice from a month to six weeks earlier than that part of the river which lay between Lake Lebarge and Dawson. The method of the White Pass and Yukon Company held an unquestionable advantage in the saving of fuel. But as the greater number of the principal mining towns and supply points for the different mining districts lay *below* Lake Lebarge it was but natural that large shipments of freight for early summer delivery were consigned to the Northern Navigation Company, at St. Michael. A great rivalry sprang up between these two companies. Keen competition followed. But it was soon realized that each was working under difficulties which ought to be and could be reme-

died. The White Pass and Yukon Company was dependent upon the river transportation for existence. So a merger of the two seemed vital to the interests of both. In June, 1914, the White Pass and Yukon Company bought out the Northern Navigation Company, thus securing a monopoly of the Yukon from source to mouth. The result has been that the greater portion of the freight now shipped into the interior of Alaska is taken over the White Pass road and then floated down the river. This has seriously affected St. Michael, of course, as it has deprived this once busy little city of the greater part of her revenue.

As is the case in all new countries many of the companies organized during this busy period in Alaska's history have now passed out of existence, due, no doubt, to too great haste in the beginning. The Alaska Commercial Company was not slow in realizing the good fortune which had come to her. All the business so suddenly born of the lure of the gold fields was tossed into her lap. She had to build extensive shipyards, install machine shops and build river craft. Stores, warehouses, dwellings and an hotel were built at St. Michael. Rival companies were organized,—the Alaska Exploration Company, the Alaska Development Company, and many others. Only



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two of these survived for any length of time, however. One was a Chicago concern—the North American Trading and Transportation Company. The other was the Northern Navigation Company. For a while these flourished. The establishment of the former was across the Bay of St. Michael and was a little town in itself. The latter was on the island. To-day, these, too, have passed. The enterprises were not a success in recent years, and the plants are deserted.

St. Michael lies about a hundred and twenty-five miles south of Nome. It is hugged by the sea and therefore gets a certain amount of “damp” cold in winter instead of the “strong” or the “still” cold of the interior. Also, during the winter it is sometimes tragically stormy—terrific high winds with no forests to break them. In summer, however, it is delightful and most picturesque. It is covered by the tundra—Russian moss—always fresh and beautiful, lying over the island like a robe of soft green velvet. Plank sidewalks line the streets, extending to the Army Post, and where the sidewalks end the walking ends also in summer. To step off is to sink ankle deep in the soft green moss.

Under the chapter devoted to the native races the subject of the natives on St. Michael will be more fully dealt with. In other sections of Alas-

ka the natives are largely Indians. Here only the Eskimo is to be seen. The visitor will encounter him everywhere in summer—in the streets, loafing in the stores, beaching or launching his boat on the water front, clad in the native costume, the *parka*, made of drill in summer and of fur, beautiful in design, in winter, shod in *mukluks*. At every turn one will find their handiwork for sale—carved ivories from walrus tusks, baskets, fur boots. Should one wish an ivory cribbage board there is no other place, with the possible exception of Nome, where he will find so large a variety from which to choose. As for the Eskimo woman,—well, in the far places of the world where there is little civilization and no pretense whatever on the part of humanity to be other than wholly natural one soon becomes accustomed to the unusual! There is no commoner sight in St. Michael than that of the native mother sitting in the street unconcernedly feeding her baby (sometimes two of them) after Nature's most primitive and wholesome method!

## CHAPTER IV

### NORTHERN LIGHTS

**A**LASKA is a land of such wild beauty, so full of interest and charm, that it seems a pity that so mistaken an idea persists in regard to her climate. Yet that it does persist is scarcely to be wondered at. It is the knowledge we acquire in childhood which usually abides with us longest. So the preconceived idea which we absorbed in our youth from both our histories and our geographies is hard to eradicate. "Our country purchased this cold and barren land from Russia," we were taught, and "Alaska is noted for her ice-covered seas and her glaciers." Furthermore, when that far-sighted statesman, W. H. Seward, negotiated, in 1867, for the purchase of this great territory from Russia, the majority of Americans had so visualized Alaska as a country of perpetual snows and glaciers that even the most important newspapers and journals facetiously referred to the purchase as *Seward's ice-box*.

Severe climatic conditions, while they do exist

in the extreme Arctic regions, are by no means typical of the country as a whole. The greater part of Alaska lies in the North Temperate Zone. Southeastern Alaska is comparatively mild. The Alaskan Peninsula, while rather frigid in winter, is most enjoyable in summer. There is no fact, seemingly, which is so hard to impress upon those who have never visited Alaska as that in regard to the "strong" cold of the interior. Yet it *is* a fact that if one is prepared for it he does not find it uncomfortable. True, for six months of the year the average temperature is below zero, and zero in this country, instead of being at the bottom of the thermometer, is half way up the scale! Fifty below is often recorded. Eighty below is not unusual. And occasionally the mercury freezes and the thermometer refuses to register! But——. It is the absolute and unvarnished truth that the climate of the interior of Alaska is fully as comfortable in winter as that of the northern part of the United States,—much more comfortable than in those states and cities where one is subjected to fogs and dampness in addition to low temperature. I have been colder and far more uncomfortable in both Boston and Chicago than I ever was in Alaska. In the interior there is practically no wind, no dampness. The still, dry air is wonderfully invigorating, and heavily charged with

electricity. One frequently gets a shock from shaking hands, while a kiss for one's best girl is a matter for prayerful consideration!

One may wear in the Alaskan cities clothing of the same quality and weight as that worn in the States. The addition of a fur coat will make him thoroughly comfortable, even in the most extreme weather. This is not true of the trails, however. One must resort to the *parka*, the native costume with the long fur boots, if he wishes to be able to resist the cold.

Spirit thermometers are expensive and so other means of taking the temperature have been devised. Pain-killer is known to freeze at forty-five and alcohol at seventy-five below zero. When the still cold comes on the pain-killer is put out. When it freezes, the alcohol replaces it. When the latter freezes we give it up with a feeling that it really does not matter how much colder than seventy-five below it is!

We are familiar with the old legend to the effect that the abode of the Hyperboreans was in some distant region far beyond the North Wind! That it was a Paradise, the Elysian Fields, a land of perpetual sunshine and marvelous fertility, inaccessible by land or by sea! I have often had occasion to ponder upon this legend during my various journeyings in Alaska. Did you ever

take a *daylight* photograph by the *Midnight* Sun? I have. Did you ever sun yourself, at midnight, at a picnic? Or try to sleep in a land where there is no such thing as night? Where there are twenty-four hours of sunshine, necessitating the curtaining of the windows in order to be able to keep one's eyes closed and to obtain for both eyes and nerves that real rest which comes only with the darkness? I have, many times.

Nowhere else in all the world are there such wondrous tints as in Alaska. To appreciate the beauty of the land, however, one needs must be an early riser. To have seen the marvelous change which comes over the pure whiteness of the snow-crowned crests between the darkness and the dawn! The tender violet becomes topaz, the topaz deepens into gold. The gold merges into burnished copper, the copper into rose, the rose into crimson, and then—the day is born! No man can see the dawn break over the mountain tops, especially if it be in a lonely, sparsely-peopled land, without feeling as did the poet when he wrote:

“For I know of a sun and a wind,  
And some plains and a mountain behind,  
Where there's neither a road nor a tree—  
Only my Maker and me!”

In Alaska, as elsewhere, we have a land of contrasts, it is true. In December there are but two and a half hours of daylight. At noon the sun throws long horizontal rays and on cloudy days the colors of the sunrise merge into those of the sunset! And there is ever the long twilight—no matter what time of the year it may be. On the shortest day there are slight traces of daylight from about nine until three o'clock.

He who has never seen the winter night in Alaska has missed one of the most beautiful sights in the whole world. In many other corners of this earth I have watched the coming of the night but nowhere else has it ever moved me so deeply. Here, as nowhere else, "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork!" How many times have I sat in my door-way and watched the ending of the day. If there have been a few flying clouds during the afternoon they seldom fail to clear at evening. One by one the stars come out. From some remote darkness long meteors slip silently and shoot across the heavens, leaving phosphorescent trails, their scattered star dust, behind them. The features of the distant mountains, so lovable by day, become grim, hard, forbidding, when at nightfall they gather their gray hoods about their

heads and go to sleep, standing! Ah, the wild, weird beauty of an unpeopled land!

The old Italian adage "See Naples and die!" never fails to spring to my mind whenever I look out upon the dark, crisp, bespangled night sky in Alaska. Over all its other brilliancy the vivid tones of the Aurora, flashes of green and red, shoot riotously. The Northern Lights! Only in Alaska does one see them in all their gorgeous glory! If sentiment be a part of man's make-up (and where is he who can deny it?), the lover of the *Land of Tomorrow* will not even attempt to stifle in his heart a wish that is almost a prayer. It is that when the hour shall come for him to venture forth into that undiscovered country whence no traveler returns, the Northern Lights may light him on his way!



## CHAPTER V

### GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

**I**F the idea that Alaska is the "land of ice and snow" is gradually disappearing another idea just as erroneous seems likely to take its place. This is that Alaska is the "land of gold." While it is true that along her streams and in the heart of her mountains lie minerals of the value of which no man can speak truly, the gold mines of Alaska are by no means her greatest asset. Her farms and fisheries, her enormous coal fields, the thousand and one opportunities to make money which do not exist in older localities are here to be had with small effort and little or no capital. I could cite many instances of those who have acquired wealth in this country from almost infinitesimal beginnings.

A wealthy man of my acquaintance who now owns a four story building covering a whole block in Seattle went to Nome when the great rush was on. Unlike the others he neither sought for gold nor located mines. All he possessed was a boat. He established a ferry on Snake River,

which is only about fifty or sixty feet wide. He charged twenty-five cents a trip. As soon as he got together a little sum he bought a steamboat which had been wrecked on the river and converted it into a lodging house. Two years later he was president of a bank!

This is only one instance of hundreds which are a matter of personal knowledge. I know of four sisters who came to this country after a hard struggle in the States. They bought a few wash tubs and opened a laundry. Two of them mended for the miners. The other two washed and ironed. They netted a hundred dollars a day! Two of them married. The other two opened a millinery and dry goods store. They made a fortune. They live in the west now and could live in affluence if they so desired. They have invested in government bonds and other safe securities and are the best exemplification of the possibilities of the Great North that I know.

One thing which I should like to make plain and which is an item of value to the prospective resident is this: Alaska is a country where unfair dealing or trickery is not tolerated. In the early days when food was worth its weight in gold, when one was forced to pay fifteen dollars for an oyster stew and one dollar for a cup of coffee, this fact was made plain and nobody has

tried it since to my knowledge. A fellow who had set up an eating house was caught one day putting sperm candles in the soup to give it a rich flavor. The miners made short work of that man. They put him in a boat, took away the oars and set him adrift down the Yukon! In my first years in this country the appearance of the first boat which got through the ice in the spring was a great event. We knew it would bring us fresh vegetables and eggs. This was before the days when we raised crops of any kind. Cheerfully we paid the fabulous prices for tomatoes, grape fruit, eggs and such things. And not infrequently we ate all that we purchased at one sitting!

In listing the business opportunities in Alaska perhaps one may as well begin with that most important asset of any country,—the land itself. Any of the valleys on Cook Inlet contain many acres of good agricultural land, some of which is timbered. The coast line from Wrangell to the Aleutian Peninsula, split by many streams, has also many acres. The better place to locate, however, is near the large towns. The Susitna and Matanuska valleys hold the coal fields and near them are thousands of acres where the wild hay for cattle grows in great abundance. There is much less loss of stock in Alaska in winter than

in Montana and the Dakotas. The coldest day on the Alaskan coast last winter south of the Aleutian Islands was above zero. For fifteen years (and this is as long as the records have been kept) there has never been a week when the average temperature has been as cold as that of New York, Washington or Philadelphia. Alaska's climate gives the lie to her latitude.

It is, of course, the Japan current which transforms this part of Alaska. What magic it works, —this warm, life-giving stream! It clothes the northern isles in green vegetation, makes the silk-worm flourish far north of its rightful locality and brings warmth and joy to the dwellers of the Far North.

The government has committed itself to a new policy of development in Alaska. The vast riches of this country are not to be exploited at haphazard or at the whim or the will of private corporations or individuals. The national shoulders have been squared to the task of developing the country and her resources in a manner conservative, sane, and in keeping with the magnitude of the interests at stake. Practically all the land and natural resources of the country are still the property of the United States.

There is a plan on foot for the creation of a Development Board, to be appointed by the

President and confirmed by the Senate. It includes the voting of an appropriation sufficient to obtain men of ability who will devote themselves to the task and *who will live in Alaska!* This is as it should be. Alaska's interests, now batted back and forth between the General Land Office, the Forest Service, the Road Commission, the Bureau of Mines, the Bureau of Education and the Secretary of the Interior, would all be handled by one body whose *raison d'être* would be the welfare of Alaska. All her activities are closely related. All are a part of one huge problem and all should be directed by one governing board.

There are sixty-four million acres of agricultural land in Alaska which can be made valuable for tilling and grazing. Some of this is already under cultivation but there is not yet an output more than sufficient to supply the home markets. The farming area, according to the surveys which have been made, is as large as the combined area of the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire, and in the opinion of the Department of Agriculture this area ought to be capable of supporting a population nearly equal to that supported by the farm products of these states.



**"SIMROCK MARY'S" HERD OF REINDEER COMING OVER  
THE HILL**



**SLEDDERS OFF FOR PROVISIONS FOR THE REINDEER  
HERDERS**



**PRIIBLOF ISLANDS WHERE UNCLE SAM PROTECTS THE  
FUR SEAL**



**COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF "MURRS" HAVE MADE THIS  
ISLAND THEIR OWN**

Almost every kind of a crop can be raised in Alaska, although corn will not grow at all and the soil is not particularly good for wheat. But barley, oats, rye, potatoes, cabbages, turnips, tomatoes, and nearly all the common garden vegetables have been grown successfully. The potatoes are of the best quality and run several hundred bushels to the acre.

Wild fruits grow abundantly. Nearly every kind of berry (except the cranberry) can be raised here. Only two years after the terrible eruption of Mt. Katmai, on the Alaskan Peninsula just opposite Kodiak Island, the ash-laden hillsides were again covered with verdure. The rich green grass grew as high as a man's head and it really seemed that the eruption was the best thing that had ever happened for Kodiak. The grass not only grew high. It grew much earlier than it ever had before and the berries were much larger and more luscious than they had been before the ash covered the land. The berry crop was enormous. Kodiak, like Ireland, is now an "Emerald Isle." The eastern part of it is covered with a magnificent forest of spruce beyond which lies luxuriant grass land, the abundance and quality of which for hay and forage is not approached by any grazing land in the United States. It is equaled only by the "guinea grass".



of the tropics. At present this part of the country is almost entirely neglected. But one of these days the stock raisers of the world will wake up. They will find no finer spot on earth for the promulgation of their industry than the Island of Kodiak.

Of the berries which grow in Alaska the most important is the "Molina" berry. In shape and appearance it is much like our blackberry, or a cross between the blackberry and raspberry. When picked it comes loose from the receptacle like the raspberry. These berries grew in Kodiak before the eruption, it is true, but they were much smaller and less palatable and the vines were much less hardy and vigorous. In one respect they resemble the persimmon. They have an astringent taste which disappears only when the berry is dead ripe. But they are extremely delicate of flavor,—distinctive in that they resemble in taste nothing else that I know and when served with sugar and cream they are excellent.

There are two varieties of blueberries. One is known as the high-bush blueberry and the other is known as the low-bush berry. I have always thought it a little strange that the cranberry does not grow here. Conditions seem good for it. But it does not.

When the railroad is completed (which will be

soon), when the farmer has an outlet for his produce and can enter the markets of the "Outside," the future of Alaska will be secured. The government is now selling the land at most reasonable rates. For four hundred dollars one can buy a three hundred and twenty acre farm. Pioneers are rapidly taking advantage of this to become independent land owners.

Time was in the United States when, beyond the Mississippi, Wilderness was King! But this did not prevent the settler from breaking his way through. So it is in Alaska. The trees are being hewn down for clearings and in those clearings homes are springing up. More men each year are locating homesteads and bringing their families with them, secure in the knowledge that their children can be educated in Alaskan schools, fed with Alaskan meat and vegetables, their bills paid in Alaskan gold. There is a market for everything that can be grown and this market will be much enlarged by the increased population which the railroad will bring. Alaska will soon be a populous and prosperous country and will one day ask admission to the Union. When she comes in, bringing her six hundred thousand square miles, she will be the largest State. Texas, so long the giant, will be a dwarf in comparison.

To sum up, then, the opportunities which of-

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fer themselves in Alaska,—there are (1) cattle ranges of enormous size; (2) immense salmon shoals; (3) huge tracts of farming land; (4) large forests (in certain sections) of fine timber; (5) an almost unlimited supply of fur. The United States has no tin mines except in Alaska. There is enough coal buried under the soil to keep the whole world warm for five thousand years! The coal, tin and gold must be mined. Here is a chance for large numbers of workmen. The fish must be caught and canned. The canneries employ large numbers of men. But the crying need of the country is for homesteaders, because the agricultural development is of prime importance to Alaska and to the world. The first binder operated in Fairbanks in 1911 and the first threshing machine in 1912. In time implement houses will be needed. Manufacturing enterprises offer a rich field. At present (1918) there is not a single grain mill in the country. This may be due, however, to the fact that there is not yet a large enough amount of grain raised to justify the building of mills. But in time there will be. There is unlimited water power for their operation.

Mr. Michael O'Kee, a Yukon Territory gardener, is regarded as the Luther Burbank of Alaska. He has specialized in berries and has

proved that they may be grown just as well around the Arctic Circle as in sun-kissed California. Also, he has grown cabbages weighing eighteen pounds with heads hard and sound.

Reindeer breeding is fast becoming an important factor, and here again one must revert to the land. Reindeer need space, for they are the beef of Alaska and must have pasturage. This pasturage is always to be had. Reindeer steaks are and have been for a long time regularly quoted on the Seattle markets. That they will one day figure conspicuously in our meat supply cannot be questioned. Already the big packing concerns have sent their representatives to look over the ground. There is one drawback to this industry, however, which will have to be adjusted and regulated before it can become profitable. The cost of shipping is now prohibitive. Alaska has now a hundred thousand reindeer. Within the next ten years she will have three million.

A well-known mining engineer of Los Angeles who has recently studied the resources of Alaska has thus summed up his belief:

- (1) The reindeer ranches of the Far North are destined to solve the meat question for the United States.
- (2) The fisheries of the north coast waters

will be able to furnish practically all the sea food for the entire country within the next century.

- (3) The gold, copper and other valuable mines of Alaska have scarcely been scratched, and the next few years will see an Alaskan boom not now dreamed of by the most optimistic business men of the United States.

## CHAPTER VI

### POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

**U**NTIL recent years one administration after another completely ignored the real worth of Alaska. It was organized as a "non-contiguous territory" in 1886. Not until seventeen years later was it supplied with a form of government of any kind, and even then the laws of Oregon were extended to it. In 1899, however, gold was discovered in the sand on the beach at Nome! The attention of Congress was promptly directed to this "non-contiguous territory" and the next year (1900) actual civil government was granted. In 1906 the first representative was sent to Congress. In 1912 a territorial assembly, with limited powers, was authorized.

To say that Alaska has suffered and been hindered in her development by this legislative apathy on the part of Congress would be putting it mildly. First of all, one of the greatest needs of any new country was wholly lacking. The absence of any kind of a criminal code was a bit appalling. It is a matter of record that once the

settlers, in dire need, were forced to seek the protection of the English navy! There was also a lack of proper legal, medical and educational facilities, and as Alaska's importance increased she became a helpless victim of political conditions some of the results of which were serious. One of these results was an unnecessary Forest Service. Another was the belated opening of the coal fields. A third was a long period of very meagre transportation facilities.

The discussion of all these important matters by government officials was lengthy and profound. But, as usual, wherever and whenever new policies are projected there is always the pessimist who stubbornly blockades progress. Alaska was no exception. So advance in her affairs was negligible.

One hears much, especially in these restless days, of the red tape which results from the lack of coördination in our government. But, with the possible exception of the Secretary of the Interior, only one who has dwelt in Alaska can appreciate to what lengths it extends. In an article published not long ago in the *Outlook*, Mr. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, expressed himself forcibly upon this subject as it concerned Alaska, making use of the following illustration:

"A citizen who wished to lease an Alaskan island for fox farming carried on a correspondence with three different departments of the Federal Government for several months in an effort to find out which had jurisdiction and authority to make the lease. It was finally decided that none of them did!"

Further investigation brought forth the following astonishing facts: The control of Alaskan lands is in one department, the control of forests in another. The control of roads is in a third, of fisheries in a fourth, of railroads in a fifth! The black bear is entrusted to one department and the brown bear to another! Cables and telegraphs comes under another department, reindeer and the native races under still another. Entry for homestead or mineral land, if it lie *outside* the national forest, is made through one department, if *within* the national forest through another. Timber in the national forest is sold at auction under the *Department of Agriculture*. Timber outside the national forest is sold (under wholly different rules and regulations) under the *Department of the Interior*. One may export the pulp made from timber in the public lands, but the timber itself may not be exported.

A child could readily understand how all this, or much of it, might be avoided by the creation



of governmental offices in Alaska with sufficient officers to get over the large territory which must be covered. As a further illustration of what all this red tape means to those desiring to live in the north I cite a case (also referred to by Secretary Lane) which came to my personal knowledge. On October ninth, 1906, Mrs. Mary A. Dabney, of Seattle, filed a claim, recording the location on this day. The survey was made September twenty-fourth, 1908. It was approved by the Surveyor General January twenty-first, 1909. Application for patent was made March twenty-fourth, 1909. There was no protest against the validity of Mrs. Dabney's claim, and no conflicting claims. But the mineral entry was not patented until October seventeenth, 1913—*seven years after the claim was filed!* Had there been an officer on the ground, with power to act, with authority to investigate and prepare the case for the General Land Office all this long wait would have been avoided.

This lack of coördination affects almost every phase of Alaskan life and industry. Certain islands are set apart as bird reserves under protection (?) of the Biological Survey which sends a keeper *in summer* to guard one or two of the islands! At other times they are unprotected. Game animals are supposedly under the protec-

tion of wardens hired by and under the direction of the Governor of Alaska. These wardens enforce the rules of the Department of Agriculture and are paid out of the appropriation of the Department of the Interior! Fur-bearing animals are under the protection of wardens appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and working under the regulations of the Department of the Interior. The Department of Agriculture has sole authority over the animals which are shipped as specimens for scientific and propagating purposes, except reindeer, which are controlled by the Department of the Interior.

Not long ago it was discovered by the Bureau of Education that the walruses were being slaughtered by the wholesale. As this is a menace to the food supply of both the natives and their dogs the Bureau at once reported it to Washington. The report was turned over to the Department of Agriculture and this Department promptly decided that the killing was illegal. When it came to putting into motion the machinery to stop it, however, the usual thing occurred. There was no machinery available to prevent it.

The prize story along this line, however, is the evidence in the case of the black bear *versus* the brown bear. Some years ago a law was passed making the brown bear a game animal. The

law was intended to protect the Kodiak bear, the "great brown bear" as it is called. So the brown bear passed under the control of the Department of Agriculture. The black bear, recognized as a fur-bearing animal, remained under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce. And then the fun began! Scarcely a litter of black bear cubs but contains one or more brown ones! To which Department of our National Government shall the little brown brothers and sisters be awarded? One protests against the separation of families in this manner! The question we are asking ourselves and which yet remains to be solved is: Is *a* brown bear of Alaska *the* brown bear?

The Forest Service as it was inaugurated also proved a detriment. Rules and regulations which worked well in the States could not be intelligently applied to Alaska. As an illustration,—there was a territorial law in force at the time the Service took charge which forbade the shipment of timber into the United States. Under the new Service, timber might be exported provided stumpage were paid to cover the Service's expenses. In case of the reserve forest on the Alexander Archipelago, however, an exception was made. This forest was withdrawn (it was said) in order that the timber kings could not rifle it

for export purposes. Yet——. The old territorial law would have furnished ample protection and would have been a better measure of conservation than the one introduced by the Forest Service.

Any system which imposes irritating restrictions (as this one undoubtedly did) upon the pioneers of a sparsely-peopled country is a mistake for many reasons. Such a system never fails to operate against itself. And this system proved a boomerang. Under it the railroads, wishing to buy Alaskan lumber for construction purposes, had to pay for it at the stumpage rates of the Forest Reserve! Meanwhile Alaska was suffering for lack of transportation facilities and it is difficult for even the most optimistic conservative enthusiast to see *improvement* in such measures.

The belated opening of the coal fields was but one more instance of the legislative indifference which hindered Alaska's development. Eastern coal operators were shipping coal in large quantities to the Pacific coast. In Alaska the belief was general that when the Panama Canal was once in operation these operators would intrench themselves strongly on the coast, confident that they would be able to compete with operators from Alaska as soon as the latter's coal fields

were released. Naturally, the first man on the ground would have the advantage and the Alaskans grew almost desperate as time went by and the troublesome situation was not relieved. In 1914, however, a bill was passed in Congress which authorized the leasing of the coal fields and permitted the lessee to rent two thousand five hundred and sixty acres at a yearly rental of one dollar an acre, this to be applicable on the royalty demanded, which was two cents a ton.

In the matter of highways Alaska was also handicapped. Wheeled traffic here was out of the question until roads were built. Railroads which can not touch the interior are limited as to their usefulness. The highways are of paramount importance to the development of any country. But a Board of Commissions for Alaska was organized a few years ago and since then the building of roads has increased.

Even in the face of all these handicaps and difficulties, however, we are not pessimistic. In time they will, they *must*, adjust themselves. As soon as sufficient roads are built to enable settlement it will be only a question of time (and a short time at that) until Alaska will become self-supporting. Her vast resources can not be dealt with singly. They must be dealt with as a whole. When once the United States grasps Alaska's

needs and conditions, when her receipts and disbursements pass through a single, responsible Board which shall each year report to Congress the revenues and expenses, the government will undoubtedly form an Alaskan budget which will render legislation in her behalf much simpler and more intelligent.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PARALLEL STEEL BARS

**A**S is the case in all new countries the most serious problem that has yet confronted Alaska has been the lack of railroads. All men recognize that in the parallel steel bars lie the means of unlocking the treasures of an empire. In them rest the future successful or unsuccessful attempts to develop the resources of any new land.

When the importance of building railroads in Alaska became apparent the old, old serpent, the cobra of civilization, raised its head and spread its hood. Should those roads already built in the country be left to private interests, such as the Morgan-Guggenheim Syndicate, at the risk of a possibly unfair monopoly in the future? Or should the United States own and control them? The question was long and strongly argued. But the matter was definitely decided on March twelfth, 1914, when Congress voted in favor of government ownership.

The President was directed to "locate, build,

or purchase and operate" a system of railroads at a cost not to exceed thirty-five million dollars. William C. Eads was made Chairman of the Railroad Commission. Construction was commenced in 1915, with Anchorage, on Cook Inlet, for a base. The Alaska and Northern Railway was purchased and became a part of the new system. The road, beginning at Seward, was to run along the southern coast through the Susitna Valley and Broad Pass to the Tanana River, with a terminal at Fairbanks. Its length, including a short branch to the Matanuska coal fields, was to be five hundred and four miles.

In eight months' time a right of way was cleared for forty miles and thirteen miles of track laid. Then came a halt. The inevitable labor troubles broke forth. These were finally adjusted, however, and the construction resumed, and it was hoped by the fall of 1917 to reach the Menana coal fields, about a hundred miles south of Fairbanks.

We are prone to believe that when the money to build a railroad has been appropriated the most important and difficult part of the job is accomplished. This is a huge mistake. For the Congress of the United States to vote thirty-five million dollars to build a railroad in Alaska was



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easy. To build that road was an herculean undertaking.

Fairbanks is the geological center of the country. To reach it from the coast the engineer must break through a wilderness of forest and mountains, swamps and glaciers. They must haul a great quantity of material by sledges in winter so that the construction of many special roads may not be necessary. The experience gained in Panama, and the recent opening of the coal mine near the road already completed, helped considerably, but the perils involved in engineering in Alaska, coupled with the rigorous winter weather, are those of all similar projects multiplied by ten!

To illustrate by but one instance (and it will give some idea of the labor involved) in the first forty miles of the line there are sixty-seven bridges! Many of them span deep and almost inaccessible cañons. During the winter months the snow, sometimes twenty-five to thirty feet deep, had to be removed before the work could be carried on, and during the time of building the temperature varied little. It was twenty to forty below zero all the time! Nevertheless the men worked courageously on and spring found them far on the way.

One of the most brilliant feats of engineering

that has yet been achieved was accomplished during the building of the Copper River railroad in Alaska. To me it seemed little short of phenomenal. It was necessary to span Miles Glacier. The bridge is fifteen hundred feet long. There is a double turn in the river here, and it flows between the two faces of the Miles and Childs glaciers, both "living," a sheer three hundred feet. The engineers were well aware that when the spring "break-up" should come, thousands of icebergs would come battering down the defile. Would it be possible to erect a bridge with four spans, the abutments of which could be made sufficiently strong to withstand the onslaught of these icebergs, propelled as they were by the twelve mile current of the river? Everybody (except the engineers) declared it impossible.

When I remember how intensely interested I myself became in watching the progress of this wonderful building I often wonder what the feelings must have been of those to whom success or failure meant so much,—the builders themselves. Never shall I forget the tenseness of the closing days of that undertaking,—the grim, silent determination written in the faces of those men! In spite of the Doubting Thomases (of whom, I confess, I was one) the thing was triumphantly, gloriously accomplished.

It was at the cost of two years of the stiffest fighting that Man has ever put up against Nature. The great concrete piers, begun through the winter ice, were driven forty to fifty feet through the river bottom and there anchored. The solid concrete was reinforced with steel. A row of eighty pound rails, set a foot apart all around, the whole structure bound together with concrete, were placed next. Then above the piers, ice-breakers, similarly constructed, were planted.

It was conceded in the beginning that no false work would stand against the battering ice. Therefore the work of connecting the piers with the steel road-way must be done in winter. It was a cruel and trying task. The weather did its worst. It was bitter cold. Snow storms were practically continuous. The piercing wind blew sixty to ninety miles an hour and the fine particles of snow hurled by the gale cut and stung one's face like shot.

When the last span was almost in place there came a most appalling moment. The "false work," as the supports are technically called and which in this case consisted of two thousand piles driven forty feet into the bottom of the river, suddenly moved fifteen inches! The ice, a solid sheet, was borne on a twelve knot current. Into

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it the piles had been frozen as solidly as a rock. The spring break-up had begun in the river. The ice-cap, lifted twenty feet above its winter bed, began to move!

The false work with its mass of unfinished steel was fifteen inches out of plumb. Not to get it back meant that communication with the other side could not be established that winter. The engineers recognized that at any moment the whole span, supports and all, might be carried away. The magnitude of the fight they would have to put up in order to prevent this was realized by all of them. But they determined not to lose heart.

I shall never forget the scene which followed. It was like a huge motion picture and I have always regretted that a camera man was not at hand to preserve it. Steam from every available engine was turned into every available feed pipe. Every man in camp was put to work chopping the seven-foot ice away from the piles. At last this was done. That which followed was the climax of the picture. It was a scene which could never fade from the memory of him who saw it. During that stinging Arctic day and the night which followed it, *during which the river rose twenty-one feet*, the piles were kept free from ice while hundreds of cross-pieces were unbolted!

Then the shifting into place began,—at first but one inch a day, then two, three, then four inches a day. The melting and the chopping went on unceasingly, no one daring to relax his vigilance for one moment unless there was a man at his elbow to take his place. Anchorages were quickly made in the ice above the bridge. Feverishly every man, from the chief engineer to the last laborer, worked while that whole four hundred and fifty feet of intricate bridge work was coaxed, inch by inch, back into its place. Finally, at midnight, after an eighteen hour day of one shift, the anxious and weary men had the happiness and the satisfaction of seeing the great span settle down on its concrete bed. The last bolt was driven in. One hour later,—the river broke loose! In less time than it takes to record it the whole four hundred and fifty feet of false work was a pile of chaotic wreckage. But the river had been vanquished. It had lost the fight by a single hour! The people of Alaska and the United States Government can never sufficiently reward such men as these. Mere money can not pay for such achievement.

In contrast to the strenuous experience just related the builders of the White Pass and Yukon road had a most amusing episode to record. The bears in the vicinity got altogether too

friendly. At first the blasting frightened them. But they soon learned to follow the example of the men and scuttle to shelter until it was over. They became so crafty that nothing which could possibly be eaten was safe unless some one watched it night and day. The bears actually learned to recognize the warning shouts of the foreman and to secrete themselves so cunningly that in the temporary absence of the men they could sneak out of their hiding place and steal the contents of the workmen's dinner pails! It might have been funny had it not been that the men were often far from a base of supplies and facing the possibility of starvation.

Now, in Alaska we have a method of dealing with thieves which is usually effective, but in this case it did not work. The bears could not read! Every dweller in Alaska has heard the story of William Yanert. He came into the country from God-knows-where and built himself a cabin in the Yukon Flats. He calls his abode "Purgatory." Nobody knows why he lives there or what particular sin he is accepting punishment for, as the name of his cabin would indicate. We do not often ask questions on such subjects in Alaska. And Yanert seems absolutely contented with his lot! When the Mounted Police began driving undesirable characters out of Dawson, however,

Yanert returned several times from hunting trips to find that his cabin had been robbed of supplies which he had laid in for the winter. He resolved that the next time he left home he would leave warning, and while he was pondering upon the most effective method of doing so he heard a noise at the back of his house and went to investigate. He peeped out and saw a Canada jay (known commonly in Alaska as a "whisky-jack" or a "camp-robber") picking away at his bacon. He shot the bird. Then with the grimmest sort of humor he buried it in a full-sized grave, shaping it just as though a man were lying there. He fashioned a headboard on which he painted in letters so heavy that none could fail to read:

**HE  
ROBBED MY CAMP AND I  
SHOT HIM.**

Yanert had no further trouble with looters.

The importance and the significance of the construction of the government railroad are things which can be rightly appreciated only by those who live, or have lived, in Alaska. In another year (1919) unless delayed by the war, Pullman cars for the comfort and convenience of passengers will be running from Fairbanks to the sea. Freight cars will carry the great re-

sources of the country from "Interior" to "Outside." But while these things mean much to Alaska there is one thing which means much more. This is the construction of a *government railroad leading into the United States!* This is a thing I have not even heard discussed and the possibility of such an enterprise, so far as I know, has not yet been sounded. Only two-fifths of Alaska is mapped! But one has but to stop and think a moment in order to realize that such a road would be of untold value. And this value is not alone commercial, by any means. Is not Alaska a country worth having? I think so. America thinks so. *Japan thinks so!* It is by no means outside the possibility of conception that, coveting her, she may one day attempt to possess her. In the event of such a contingency, unless conditions are altered (and that without delay), Alaska may one day be lost to us. She is now reached only by the sea. Soldiers and sailors must enter the country by that route. How about a transport or a battleship? In time of war would they be able to reach Alaskan ports?

These are questions on which the thoughtful will not fail to ponder. Alaska's one defense in time of need would be the army, and that army, in order to reach her, would have to run the gauntlet of a naval enemy's fleet. The gravity of



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such a situation would be much lessened by the ability to transport military forces (whether the times be those of peace or war) to Alaska via a Canadian-American railroad!

## CHAPTER VIII

### FLOWERS AND BIRDS OF THE NORTHLAND

**W**HENEVER I look back over the pleasurable experiences which belong to the years I have spent in the Northland I find my thoughts dwelling upon my first summer in St. Michael. Here the summer comes almost in a day, and following upon the heels of a rigorous winter so closely, the contrast is little short of startling. Knowing naught of this sudden transformation, I was not prepared for it. But I well recall a day in June when I looked out from my door-way and wondered whether there could be another spot on earth so beautiful. Gone instantly was every memory of the dark, bleak months that had just passed. The snow still lingered on the distant mountain tops, it is true. Great masses of pure white clouds rolled upon the intensely blue sky. The vegetation was in all its vivid freshness, the tundra carpeted with flowers. Even the reeking Arctic moss itself had burst into myriad brilliant flowers. It was the season of perpetual day,—twenty-four long hours

of continuous sunshine. Nature seemed to be rejoicing in her own beauty and all the green things of the earth praised God!

I can not resist the temptation to devote a small space to the flowers and birds of Alaska. Even I who lived a good many years in our own golden west, where flowers are by no means a scarcity, or a rarity, always feel a tendency to enthuse and become expansive when I think of the beauteous wild flowers of the Northland. They lift their dainty heads out of the tundra and seem to smile radiantly at you as you pass.

I confess that when I saw the tundra first it did not make any particular hit with me! And this feeling is shared by many when first they come. I recall one of our Alaskan poets who must have shared it, for I find among his effusions a couplet to this effect:

"Sometimes it's as soggy as sawdust!  
Sometimes it's as soft as a sponge!"

Like many others I had gone to Alaska with a mental picture of a great, snow-covered expanse which stretched away for illimitable miles, in loneliness and silence. But one day as I walked along I suddenly saw—a little yellow flower. I began to wonder whether wild flowers grew here. A little investigation brought astonishing results.

I found yellow poppies as much at home as in my own California! Daisies, both white and yellow! There is a little blossom resembling in form and grace the sweet pea, but it is a rich, deep indigo blue. I do not know its name, or whether it has a name. The tiny blue forget-me-nots, the beautiful gold-and-purple iris, dainty anemones, and many others which I know not how to name. There is a starry white flower like a cherry blossom, a yellow bloom resembling a cowslip. There is the blue corn-flower, the wild heliotrope, immortelles, purple asters, violets and, most interesting of all, a purple bleeding-heart! Why purple, I wonder? In addition to these there are beautiful wild grasses, exquisite mosses with wondrous weeping tendrils and star-like blossoms. And there is a little crimson vine which grows like patches of red velvet and clings very close to the green moss.

I grew to love the tundra, whatever the time or the season. From the first warm days of the spring until the snow came swishing down and wrapped it in its soft white blanket, I enjoyed its every mood. In summer it is as beautiful as the seemingly more favored spots of the earth. In winter——. There is always the great, white, silent expanse which one grows to love also. For I find the feeling to be general among those who

live in the Northland that it is not in her milder moods that Alaska calls to us loudest. One is most deeply conscious of hidden and gigantic forces,—untrodden heights, to which one can never attain, even in spirit! There may be those who hold that the tundra is desolate, dreary. Not I!

The most striking of all the wild flowers that I have ever seen in Alaska is a species of white *claytonia*. It grows in rings as large as a dinner plate. These floral rings are dropped here and there upon the green moss and in the center of the ring is a rosette of pointed green leaves pressed close to the ground. Around this rosette grows the ring of flowers made up of forty or fifty individual blossoms, all springing from the same root, their faces turned *outward* from the green rosette. In certain places these circles grow so close together that one can scarcely walk without stepping upon them.

In addition to the wild flowers there are many cultivated ones. In Skagway, Fairbanks, and the other large towns, the garden flowers grow profusely. Their only enemy is the southerly trade winds which, on summer afternoons, frequently rise suddenly and keep everybody busy devising some means of protection for the tall growing plants. For the plants grow very tall. Think

of sweet peas nine feet high which have had no special cultivation! Pansies three inches across! Asters seven and dahlias ten inches in diameter! I have in mind one garden I saw which contained nineteen different kinds of flowers blooming at once, among them some gorgeous roses, and they were in bloom from June first to October first. No. We are not shut away from the beautiful because we live within sight of the Arctic Circle! Garden parties here rival those I have attended in the States, and I find that human nature is the same the world over! There is no nook or corner of God's earth where one, if he seeks, will not find exquisite beauty lavished impartially and unstintedly by Mother Nature, and warm and kindly hearts as well!

The birds of Alaska are many and beautiful. In fact, in one section or another of the country most of the birds common to the north temperate zone are to be found. Of the larger ones the ptarmigan, grouse, gulls and carrier pigeons are most common. A few years ago the owners of carriers discovered to their astonishment and dismay that the latter were mating with the gulls to the ruination of both birds and it became necessary to separate them. Alaska is also the home of the raven and the crow. And the former is quite the most talkative creature in the country!

When he has no other birds to chatter with he talks to himself, and like the buzzard of the southern countries, he acts as scavenger. The ravens are much more numerous than the crows.

There is a long, low, wooded stretch of land twenty miles below Muir Glacier in which ornithologists have observed and collected specimens of more than forty species of birds. Of song birds, we have the golden-crowned sparrow, the Alaska hermit and russet-back thrush. The plaintive song of the hermit thrush is so appealing. It consists of but three notes. But its song is full of beauty, of mystery, of pathos. There are also the grossbeak, the gray-cheeked thrush, the Oregon robin, the western robin, kinglet, warbler, redstart, Oregon junco, and a species of sparrow not to be found elsewhere.

In speaking of the birds of the Northland one must not omit to mention the albatross. I shall always remember one that I observed following the boat on which I was crossing Prince William Sound. I could well imagine the feelings of the Ancient Mariner as I watched it,—first on one side of the boat and then on the other, dipping, curving, slanting, but always on straight, unbending wing! Like an experienced swimmer its motion was in long, graceful strokes. It flew apparently without effort, as though it gave no



**A TYPICAL TANNANA VALLEY GARDEN**



**THE TRAIL NEAR WRANGELL IN SUMMER.  
NOTE THE BEAUTY OF THE WOODS**





LOVER'S LANE, NEAR SITKA, GUARDED BY TOTEM POLES

thought to where its next flight would take it. I could quite understand how the superstitious might look upon it as some spirit from the deep which sought to cast a spell over him and lure him on to shipwreck and to death. The gulls fly gracefully, as do also the Arctic terns. But the flight of the albatross is unlike that of any other bird I have ever seen.

Of water fowl there are also the *pomarine* and the long-tailed jaeger and the king eider duck. The pomarine jaeger is most peculiar of shape, especially while flying, and has a cruel-looking beak. The plumage of the male king eider is very brilliant and beautiful during the breeding season.

The finest singing bird in the country is the Lapland longspur. In color, flight, and its bubbling, liquid music, it suggests the bobolink. In fact, it is often referred to as "the bobolink of the North," and what bird lover does not know the lines of our beloved John Burroughs who after lying on his back under a tree for two hours patiently waiting until it should please his majesty, the northern bobolink, to sing for him, wrote:

"On Unalaska's emerald lea,  
On lonely isles in Bering Sea,  
On far Siberia's barren shore,  
On north Alaska's tundra floor,

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At morn, at noon, in pallid night,  
We heard thy song and saw thy flight,  
While I, sighing, could but think  
Of my boyhood's bobolink!"

## CHAPTER IX

### MT. MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK

**I**N 1916 a bill was presented in Congress to establish in Alaska the Mt. McKinley National Park. All lovers of the country hoped that the legislation necessary to create this park would not be long in coming. The Alaskan Range (sometimes called the Alaskan Alps), of which Mt. McKinley is the culminating peak, has no rival in scenic grandeur. The snow line is about seven thousand feet. But Mt. McKinley rises twenty thousand three hundred feet, and for the upper thirteen thousand the mountain is clad in glaciers and perpetual snows.

The region of the proposed park offered a last chance for the United States Government to preserve untouched by civilization a great primeval section in its natural beauty. Many parts of Alaska are famous for big game. But for mountain sheep, caribou and moose ranging over wide areas this section is unsurpassed. I have often seen three hundred sheep in a ten mile journey! And more caribou than I ever dreamed of exist-

ing! At one time a party of us estimated with the naked eye more than a thousand within half a mile of us and many more straggling off in the distance.

I have made no mention of the mosquitos which abound in Alaska, but so many writers have that perhaps it is not necessary to elaborate upon the subject. It is sufficient to say that here one gives them respectful attention! Many a wanderer has met his death in the early days because he was unprepared to fight them off as he plunged through the swamps and the wilderness. This "respectful attention" is shared by the animals, especially the caribou, which migrate from place to place, avoiding the plains where the mosquitos abound. Sometimes they remain high up in the rugged mountain ridges. Sometimes they even climb the glaciers. One often sees them in huge droves. They do not stay long in any one locality except in the Taklat basin and in the vicinity of Muldrow Glacier. Here they remain during the summer and rear their young.

On February twenty-sixth, 1917, the bill became a law and the Mt. McKinley National Park was created. The long dimension of the park follows the general course of the Alaskan Range from Mt. Russell to Muldrow Glacier, the Park including all the main range from its northwest

face to and beyond the summit. East of the glacier the range widens to the north and consists of a number of parallel mountain ridges separated by broad, open basins.

Moose are plentiful in certain parts of the new park but are not so commonly seen as sheep and caribou. They cling to the timbered areas for two reasons. First, because they feed upon the willow and birch twigs and leaves and the roots of water plants. Second, by nature the moose is a cautious, wary animal. He is less likely to permit familiarity than the caribou and remains where he is inconspicuous. The best hunting grounds for moose are not *within* the park but in the lowlands just north of the Alaskan Range.

Bears,—black, brown and grizzly—are here, as they are in many other parts of Alaska also. Foxes are plentiful. Lynx abound, as do the mink, marten and ermine, to a limited extent. The marshy lowlands, in addition to being the abode of the moose, are likewise the paradise of the beaver. Many a night have I lain in my tent and heard the whack-whack of their tails on the surface of the water and the splash when they went in to swim.

There is no point on which Alaska is more in need of wise and careful legislation than in regard to the game. Game will not last long un-

less protected. Already the market hunter is in the field. True, there *are* game laws in Alaska, but I have been reminded more than once of the mother who said of her naughty little daughter, "She *has* manners—but they're bad!"

The game laws are not strictly enforced and many a sled load of wild meat finds its way into the towns in winter. Fairbanks is the destination of most of it. It is a matter of personal knowledge that from fifteen hundred to two thousand sheep have been taken into this town each winter for the last three years. And if this is being done now, what will be the result when the new government railroad is completed to within fifteen miles of the park? There is but one answer. The game will disappear rapidly. Forebodings on this point have been quieted to a certain extent, however, so far as the game in the park itself is concerned. The law, while it grants miners and prospectors permission to kill what they need for food, stipulates expressly that "in no case shall animals or birds be killed in said park for sale, or removal, or wantonly."

It is the easiest thing in the world to reach Mt. McKinley Park. One may leave Seattle and within a week be in Anchorage, or Seward. From here it is but a day's ride to the Park Station. A couple of days in the saddle and one

will find himself in the midst of the herds. Furthermore, this time will be shortened. It is inevitable that a road will be built. Then, half a day in a motor and the horseback journey will be eliminated.

Regarded as a purely business proposition, the creation of this Park was quite worth while. Other and much less attractive lands advertise their natural beauties so alluringly that tourists flock to them, spending millions of dollars for diversion far less pleasurable than that which may be had right here in our own country. A good road, a good hotel or two, and this National Park in Alaska will call to her a much larger percentage of tourists than our government now imagines.

Almost every animal in Alaska has its own particular locality. The small black bear is the exception. It may be found everywhere. In southeastern Alaska the shy, black-tail deer is to be seen. It is a pretty, graceful creature, with a glossy coat, an impudent little black tail and slender, curving horns. If it were tame one could easily carry it in his arms. It seldom weighs more than a hundred pounds. Hunters have made it afraid, however, and unless forced out by starvation, it seldom ventures near a human habitation.



At Mt. St. Elias the foxes abound,—blue and silver and sometimes a black one, rarest and most valuable of all. Four hundred dollars is not an unusual price for a black fox skin. Sea otters are getting scarce. The skins of these are valued at seven hundred dollars.

To find the really “Big Game,”—the largest the country affords, the moose, the huge and dangerous Kodiak bear, the caribou and the mountain sheep, one should go to the rugged, mountainous peninsula between Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet. The moose shed their antlers periodically and I quite agree with a fellow hunter who one day remarked that he knew of nothing quite so pathetic-looking, so subdued and sympathy-seeking, so meek and lowly of spirit as a bull moose without its horns! Neither do I.

The Kodiak bear is dark brown of color. And an exceedingly ugly and vicious brute as to temper! He is a born fighter. If he suspects that it is your purpose to interfere with him he will attack you ferociously. If, however, he does not happen to be hungry and you fail to bother him his lack of interest in you is often humiliating! He is, seemingly, impervious to the cold and sleeps in his cave all winter.

The Alaskan miners are great on story-tell-

ing and one of them one day related in my presence an amusing episode which he claimed was a personal experience. He said that he found himself suddenly in the immediate presence of a Kodiak bear. It was a position wholly unsought on his part and, as he remarked, unduly familiar! But he added that it was a moment when familiarity bred, not contempt, but fear. He had always heard that a sudden and unusual noise would frighten a bear away provided he hadn't seen you first! So he began hammering his gold pan with his pick, making all the din possible with the means at his command. It failed to work. He spent the night in a tall tree, meekly descending from the same when the bear, tired of waiting, went next morning to seek a breakfast elsewhere. Nor was that all. His gold pan was full of holes from being hammered with his pick!

A cunning and most amusing pet is a black bear cub, and as pets these are quite common in St. Michael and other parts of Alaska. They dance and gambol on hind feet, wrestle like human beings, and not infrequently drink from a bottle as do babies—and men!

The caribou is unquestionably the prettiest animal in Alaska. Its body is sleek and graceful as that of the antelope. Its back is brown, its flanks and legs pure white. It has enormous,

out-spreading, re-curving and sharp-pronged antlers, a distinguishing feature of which is that the first branch of one of them curves directly in front of the forehead and then spreads straight out to the front into a broad edge-wise fan which is called a "plow." The caribou roam (in herds) and feed almost entirely on grass. It is most interesting to watch them feed in winter. With the "plow" they break through the crust of the snow. Then they use the horn as a rake, scraping away the snow so that they may get at the grass underneath.

The seal, the walrus, the reindeer and the polar bear,—all are here. They are the oldest residents of the north country. But there is one thing which does *not* abide with us. This is the serpent. Evidently Ireland is not the only country from which the good St. Patrick banished the snakes. The Eskimos and Indians of Alaska probably never saw one. In fact, it is claimed that no poisonous thing exists here. But to this I make one exception. The mosquito is still with us in certain sections of the country. There are none in St. Michael, however. And no snakes! As a corroboration of this statement I submit the information that the serpent has no place in either the heraldry or the basketry of the natives of Alaska. The absence of the snake in the

Northland, however, may be due, not to the influence of St. Patrick, but to the frigidity of the climate. Anyway, we rejoice that it is so. The most timid of women may wade barefooted in the marshes without a shiver! Besides, Alaskans are proverbially kind-hearted and what one of us would willingly put himself in the position of "Old Man Snyder" of whom the mid-western poet who wrote under the name of *Ironquill* once said:

"Old man Snyder found a snake  
Frozen stiffer than a stake  
And he tucked it in his vest.  
When the saurian became thawed  
Mr. Snyder became chawed!  
And in one unbroken stream  
He proceeded to blaspheme  
And eradicate the plug  
From a little old brown jug!

Year by year, both day and night,  
Snyder tried to cure that bite,  
But he didn't have the heft!  
So one day he while tug-  
Ging at the plug  
Caught the jim-jams and got left!

Moral.

Frozen saurians are safer!  
And it's bitterer than borax  
To be gnawed about the thorax  
One's humanity to pay for!"

## CHAPTER X

### THE ALL-ALASKA SWEEPSTAKES

**N**O story of Alaska would be complete unless it included reference to that most vital element of all the Northland, the Alaskan dog. I once heard a story of an old Southern planter who said:

"Whenevah Ah meet up with a man who says he don' like a niggah, Ah always set it down that he nevah *owned* one!"

I can truthfully say the same about a dog. Ever since the days when Ulysses roamed the seas man has loved his dog. Dearest (and most valuable) to the heart of an Alaskan is his "Malamut" or "Husky," as the Alaskan dog is usually designated. So intelligent that he is almost human, strong as a young ox, oblivious (apparently) to the cold,—he is a part of the land itself! His importance to the life of the North can not be over-estimated. He carries the mail into far regions which but for him would be closed to the outside world for many months of the year.

"An I should live a thousand years," as Shake-

speare puts it, I could never forget a leader I once had. I called him "Paddie." During one long, cold winter we went to Andreafsky, distant a hundred and twenty miles from St. Michael, to take the mail. I can see him yet, at the head of the thirty-three dog team, pulling us swiftly over the hard, white snow. At night when I would wrap myself in my sleeping-bag and lie down to sleep, Paddie never failed to come and lie beside me, snuggling as closely as possible to keep me warm. I *could* not forget, if I tried, his faithfulness and affection, and I do not wish to. I think of him many times, often have dreamed of him and sometimes have talked to him in my sleep.

But laying aside all sentiment in regard to his dogs, a man would indeed be helpless in the north country without them. Into far and almost inaccessible regions which no other beast could penetrate and where neither man nor vehicle could enter unaided, the dogs run nimbly, pulling a sled behind them. Many and dramatic (and true!) are the stories of the arrival of a dog team in the nick of time with food and supplies for a distant, snowed-in camp the members of which would have starved but for their coming.

Reference will be made in another chapter to the wonderful part our dogs are now playing in

the great World War. Alaskans have never failed to appreciate what they owe them, but it is only within comparatively recent years that they have realized their real value. Nothing in the history of the country has been of more value to Alaska than the Dog Derby, the "All-Alaska Sweepstakes," as the dog races are called.

Albert Fink, an attorney at Nome, one day overheard a bet between two men as to the speed of their respective dog teams. As he owned some fine dogs himself, he conceived the idea of having a real Derby, matching the teams for the love of the sport itself. Calling together all the dog lovers and dog owners of the community, he put the suggestion before them. The result was the organization of the Nome Kennel Club, a society the purpose of which was to foster the races. The latter were to be known as the "All-Alaska Sweepstakes," and as such the races have been known ever since. The club was organized and conducted just as jockey clubs are. Rules and regulations were drawn up, officers elected, and a purse of fifteen thousand dollars collected for the first race.

Some one has ventured the opinion that nothing on earth could ever have made the city of Nome except the very thing that did make it,—the discovery of gold in the sand on the beach!

Be that as it may, it is safe to say that since that discovery nothing has ever equaled the interest it created until the first dog race was held in 1908.

Men talked of nothing else. On the day of the race the stores, banks and offices were deserted and it is a fact that the District Court was forced to adjourn. Witnesses, jurors and attorneys failed to appear. All went to the races. Thousands of dollars were wagered on the dogs, thousands more on the men who drove them. It was a day of great excitement and enthusiasm.

The course was from Nome, on Bering Sea, across Seward Peninsula to Candle and back, —a distance of four hundred and ten miles. The first race was a great event. One of the conditions was that the whole team must return to the starting-point. The weather was most severe and some of the dogs froze to death. It is no uncommon sight in Alaska to see an intrepid driver, in harness himself, helping to bring back in the sled the disabled dogs which have become incapacitated by accident or sickness. The man who loses a dog is out of the race, no matter what the cause of the loss may be. The rules provide, however, that after being certified at Candle, the turning-point, the dog does not necessarily have to be *driven* back. But the whole team must return.



The winning team of the first race were Malamuts owned by Albert Fink, driven by John Hegness. They made the distance in a hundred and nineteen hours, fifteen minutes and twenty-two seconds. The winning team was closely followed by one driven by the now-famous "Scotty" Allen and which made the course in a hundred and twenty hours, seven minutes and fifty-two seconds. Three hours elapsed before the third team came in.

The small margin of time between the first and second teams made the race, which took days to finish, of unusual interest. There was great uncertainty almost up to the last moment. But the race was regarded as a success and the event became a fixture. Heretofore, while there had been much discussion as to the breeding of racing dogs, it had been largely theoretical. Now men who owned dogs began to put their minds on it seriously.

The purse of fifteen thousand dollars collected for the first race was awarded in three prizes. Ten thousand went to the winner, three thousand to the second and two thousand to the third team. It was supposed when the amount was collected that it would be amply sufficient to tempt dog owners to become fanciers and to induce the importation and breeding of faster and

better dogs. But the sum was found to be inadequate. The total purse fell far short of the amount necessary to assemble, feed, train and condition a team.

The following year there were numerous entries for the second race. And they were not confined to wealthy dog owners, by any means. Miners, fur traders, mail carriers, to say nothing of the first delegate to Congress, entered the contest. This time "Scotty" Allen came in for his own. He drove his team himself and lowered the time to eighty-two hours, two minutes and forty-two seconds,—thirty-seven hours less than the time the first race had consumed.

Perhaps the most interesting personage in connection with the early dog racing in Alaska is Fox Ramsey. He is an Englishman, the brother of Lord Dalhousie. He was what is commonly known as a Cheechaco,—in other words, a tender-foot. He was unused to the ways of the trail, and what he did *not* know about handling dogs would fill a book. But he was a good sport. So he entered his team of Malamuts in the second race and drove them himself. He took any amount of chaff from the local drivers and the amusement of the latter was certainly justified. *Several weeks* after the race was over Ramsey drove up to the finishing post and with the ut-

most good humor notified the judges that his team had arrived!

The old saying, however, that "he who laughs last laughs best" is peculiarly applicable to Fox Ramsey. He chartered a schooner bound for Siberia. When he returned, as some one has already recorded, "Siberian huskies howled from every port hole." The crowd which had found so much merriment in his racing team of the previous year laughed louder than ever. They took not the slightest interest in the training of his dogs. Ramsey kept his own counsel. When the time came he entered the race. Then came Ramsey's turn to laugh. He took both first and second money! Not only that, he broke the record. The new one was astonishing. He covered the course in seventy-four hours, fourteen minutes and twenty-two seconds.

The good Alaskans, as always, showed the right spirit. Their amusement changed to admiration. All existing theories as to the best breeds for racing had been completely upset. Ramsey is now at the front "somewhere in France" fighting for his country—and ours! Here's to him!

It is the hope, of course, of every fancier to perfect a breed which will lower the record still more, and many hope to prove that the descend-

ants of the wolf are best adapted to the needs of the country. There is a new breed which is now being watched with interest,—the stag- and fox-hound. It has proved excellent for speed in short races but has not yet been able to hold out over the long course of the Sweepstakes. Another experiment is with the Russian wolf-hound,—beautiful dogs these are, but with courage as yet untested.

There is great difference of opinion as to the relative merits of the various breeds, and since the third race the Derby has settled down to a contest between those who believe in the superiority of the fox-hound, bird dog and Malamut cross as pitted against the pure-blooded Siberians.

Those who have never trained or watched over the training and conditioning of a team of racing dogs would find it a most interesting experience. The food of the dogs, like that of a child, is carefully watched over. It consists at first of dog-salmon, corn and cornmeal mush, rice and bacon. Later this is changed to a more strengthening diet. They are fed chopped beef, mutton and eggs. Also, one who has never visited Alaska would open his eyes wide if he could see the kennels where the dogs are kept. In fact, one sometimes wonders whether the human in-

habitants are as comfortable. To get a team in condition requires the combined efforts of a large retinue of trainers, drivers and helpers. The driver who is to pilot the first team of a kennel devotes his time and attention to the choice few of some twenty or thirty dogs. The helpers and second string drivers keep the remainder in fit condition so as to develop and gait those which must be ready to substitute in case any one of the first lot proves unequal to the qualifications for entry,—speed, soundness, courage.

It has often happened that dogs the fame of which has spread not only over Alaska but over all the world have developed from the second string. One such was Baldy of Nome, the hero of a book written by his owner, Mrs. C. E. Darling, commonly known as “The Darling of the Dogs.” Baldy is old now,—a pensioner. He lives in ease and luxury at the California estate of his mistress. His story is interesting. He was rejected at first as being not of sufficient caliber for the first team. Whether the rejection spurred him to renewed effort I do not know. But he proceeded to prove his worth. He won his way from wheel of the second team to leader of the first team. Baldy occupies a warm spot in every Alaskan heart. He worked up from the ranks,—a “self-made” dog, so to

speak, and proved his courage, his sagacity, his strength, and his endurance. One of the most interesting things about him is that he now possesses the largest service flag of any one of my acquaintance. Twenty-eight of his sons and grandsons went to the Vosges to "do their bit," and Baldy now wears the *Croix de Guerre* bestowed upon them by the French government!

Of the now-famous dogs of the Derby mention must be made of Dubby. He was the first "loose" leader ever developed in Alaska and the best. He was almost human in intelligence. He ran free from the tow line. He would take his place proudly at the head of his team, with no restraint of tow or leash, observing the spoken commands with instant obedience. From his position of authority at the head of the team, by incessant yelping and playful antics, he would encourage the others, and woe to any one of them that proved the laggard! Dubby promptly punished him. He would run back, bark and then nip him until the offender was only too glad to return to duty and resume gait. Other dogs which have won fame in the Derby are (1) Jack McMillan, a leader belonging to Albert Fink; (2) Rex, a pacer; (3) The Blatchford Blues, two thoroughbred Llewellyn setters, wonderful both as to speed and intelligence; (4) Kalma, a beautiful,

white-eyed, black-coated Siberian who has proved the most lasting campaigner of them all.

Not to the dogs alone, however, much as we love them, is due the credit for the success of the Alaskan Derby. Too much can not be said for the trainers and drivers. All of them were men deeply versed in dog lore. They had made a study of many years' duration and were imbued with theories as to the training and conditioning of dogs,—theories as varied as were the breeds of the dogs themselves. These men were knights of the trail, inured to hardship, fleet and sure of foot, gifted both with physical endurance and courage to which no words can do justice. Mention has already been made of "Scotty" Allen. He is known to every man, woman and child on Seward Peninsula. He has been in every race except the last one, either with a team of his own or one owned jointly by himself and Mrs. Darling. He developed and owns the two famous leaders, Dubby and Buddy, and their reputation is world-wide.

To "Scotty" Allen the French Government entrusted the responsibility of choosing and transporting to France more than a hundred of the Sweepstake dogs. Further reference will be made to their noble work on the war-swept fields of Europe where, with a courage and daring

equaled only by their human brothers, they carry ammunition and supplies far into the mountains,—often to remote and seemingly inaccessible spots where the soldiery could not penetrate without them. It was because of this mission that Allen was unable to enter the last race and as he has recently been elected to the Alaskan Legislature he will also be deprived of the privilege of entering this year. The session is held at the same time as the Derby. In any other country the latter might be postponed. Here it is not possible. It is a matter of much regret that the Derby can not be made a territorial affair. This was the original intention, as the name, All-Alaska Sweepstakes, indicates. But it proved impossible. The race could not be held after the spring break-up. It must have the hard spring trail and the cold weather, and the trainers must have the whole of the winter for the training and conditioning of the dogs. Therefore, April must be the month and, regrettable as the fact is, this prevents teams from Fairbanks, Iditarod and other Alaskan towns from entering. The men from these sections could not well take chances on the disappearance of the trail by an early thaw before they could return home again for the spring clean-ups. But almost every Alaskan town now has its own Kennel Club,



small or large as the case may be, and all are actively alive to the sport. Moreover, the "Outside" is by no means indifferent. Many contributions to the purse come each year to the Nome Kennel Club.

Trophies for the different races, usually cups, are, almost without exception, the gifts of men in the United States who are devotees of the sport. Unable to participate themselves, they like to aid and encourage the event. The latest trophy, and the one which unquestionably will be most sought after this year, is the cup presented by John Borden, Chicago sportsman and millionaire, who joined the Club last summer while in Nome. This cup is for a new contest,—extreme speed being the object. The course is to cover twenty-six miles, three hundred yards. It must be run under perfect conditions, it being the object and the desire of both donor and Club to learn how fast a dog team can actually travel without obstacles. The winner each year will be given a small cup, and the big trophy must be won three times in succession before it becomes the property of the winner.

In addition to Allen and Ramsey, other drivers have made substantial but less spectacular winnings. Two of these are the Johnson brothers and another is Leonard Sepalla. Their dogs were

Siberians, driven in a long string, fifteen to twenty-six to a team. These men have marvelous records for endurance, as has also Peter Berg, a mail carrier. The latter did a hundred and thirty miles without a stop for food or rest. The last thirty miles was made in harness, and in snow shoes, with what was left of his badly used-up team. Then, after hauling a large part of his frost-bitten and exhausted dogs to the finishing post he found that he had been beaten to second money by a man who had ridden four hundred miles behind his untiring and seemingly inexhaustible Siberians.

If the Alaskan Derby had had but one result,—that of developing a superior race of dogs—it would have been invaluable to Alaska. But it has done one other thing in which every dog lover rejoices. It has not only benefited the racing dog. It has materially benefited the condition of the working dog. The old rule of feeding an exhausted and over-worked team “buckskin soup” no longer goes in Alaska. Very few drivers now have the temerity to abuse a dog. It has been proved beyond doubt that better results come from kindness and care than can possibly be obtained by neglect or brutal treatment.

So, after many years’ sojourn in the country, I paraphrase the saying of the old Southern

planter. I affirm that he who does not love a dog never owned one! Here's to them,—dumb heroes of the trackless wilderness and the gigantic snow fields! Over the frozen wastes they cheerfully pull both driver and load for thousands of miles and come up smiling when the end of the long journey is reached. Into their masters' deepest affections they unconsciously walk and "stay put." They become his most sympathetic companions, comrades and friends. And the news which from time to time reaches us from "over there" where our canine heroes are doing their "bit" in a manner little short of miraculous goes straight to our hearts. Yes. The dog has come into his own. And all Alaska rejoices that it is so. Over a kingdom of devoted subjects he reigns supreme!

## CHAPTER XI

### BURIED WEALTH

**I**T is not the purpose of such a book as this to go into detail in regard to the gold and the other minerals which lie hidden in the heart of Alaska. There are many volumes dealing with the gold fields and with mines and mining which contain such definite information along those lines as the student may seek. But to those who knew Alaska both before and after the great stampede of 1898 the change of scene in the locality offers food for thought. In the great Interior, where once man alone, with only his pick and shovel, coaxed from Mother Earth in small quantities the precious yellow metal, huge monsters with an endless chain of buckets now swoop down, dig up sand and gravel by the ton and search every ounce of it for gold. One may now take a motor car and ride out to the spots where in the early days bewildering fortunes were made in a short space of time,—fortunes which in many cases were spent as fast as they were made. A well-known missionary of the Episcopal Church

relates that one day during his travels he met a man freighting with dogs along the Koyakuk River. He learned while stopping at the camp that night that in the palmy days of the gold rush this man had offered a dance-hall girl her weight in gold dust if she would marry him. She refused. But she told him she would get his dust anyway. And she did!

Twenty years have gone by since the madness at Dawson, Nome, and the other gold centers was at its height. The true story of the stampede to Klondike has never been written. Perhaps it never will be. It was unique,—not so much in the number who flocked to the gold fields. Of those who went between 1897 and 1900 thirty thousand is an elastic estimate. Far greater was the multitude which flooded California during the wild rush of '49. Eighty thousand in one year! Five thousand ships, deserted by both owners and crews, tossed idly in San Francisco Bay. Three years later there was a much larger migration to Australia. A hundred thousand gold seekers entered the port of Melbourne in 1852! But the Klondike stampede is without a parallel in history because of the conditions to be confronted. Never before had a gold region been so inaccessible, so remote. Never before had such masses of men flung them-

selves against an Arctic wilderness, determined to do or die! The result was only what was to be expected. The physically unfit perished. Only the hardy survived. Hundreds of men, fresh from offices and shops, came, bringing their city-bred habits and customs. They found them of no value in this land where Nature, in her fiercest and most savage mood, awaited them. They died,—died in almost every conceivable manner. They perished of exhaustion, of starvation, of disease. They were the victims of their own ignorance and lack of experience. They were drowned. They were smothered in snow-slides. Only the fittest held out. These, making long journeys up and down the frozen rivers, through dense forests and over rough mountains, oftentimes pulling their own sleds,—these have left no record of those tragic days for the world to read!

The Matanuska coal fields are the richest in the world, not excepting the rich mines of Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. They lie in ninety square miles of territory. The vein is fourteen feet and bears the highest grade of coking coal,—the only coal except that to be found in Virginia which is fit for the use of the Navy. It is estimated that this coal can be mined and shipped to San Francisco at a cost of four dol-

lars a ton, that if it should be sold at retail at six dollars a ton, the price would be nine dollars cheaper than the present price of coal in Los Angeles! In my judgment this solves the coal question, both as to its use for domestic purposes and in time of war as well. The new government railroad leads directly into the Matanuska coal fields.

As far as the mineral deposits,—the gold, copper, tin, etc.,—are concerned one may truthfully say that they have not yet been touched, although the yearly output is more than thirty-two million dollars. The richest mines are not the gold mines. They are the copper mines. Last year (1917) the Kennicott copper mines produced the largest per cent of the thirty-two million. And the copper production doubles in value the entire production of gold. Since the purchase of Alaska the country has produced in excess of five hundred million dollars,—a country which was bought for seven million two hundred and fifty thousand! Alaska was Uncle Sam's best bargain.

Harry Olsen, a member of Stefanson's latest expedition, asserts that fabulous deposits of native copper were seen by them on Bank's Island, about six hundred miles north of Great Bear Lake. The Eskimos use copper for everything

for which any kind of metal is used and because it is so plentiful and so easy to obtain they think it of no value.

In 1913 I was going from Nome to Siberia on the S. S. *Victoria*. Among the passengers were Dr. and Mrs. Anderson and several members of Stefanson's party. We put them off into their own boats in the Roadstead, outside of Nome. The expedition was wrecked just after leaving Diomed Islands and the party lost for a year. Amundsen, when he returned through the Northwest Passage, reported having seen a tribe of blond Eskimos. Stefanson was on his way to verify that report. Later a second expedition was fitted out and the report substantiated.

There are many famous placer gold mines,—at Nome, at Dawson, and at the other localities in the Yukon. Two of the largest quartz mines in the world are at Juneau,—the Alaska Juneau and the Alaska Gastineau. Each plant handles from eight to ten thousand tons of ore a day. The Juneau mines had produced sixty-two millions of dollars' worth of ore when the ocean broke through and flooded the works. Two-thirds of the property was ruined. But the remaining third, now enclosed by a huge concrete dam, is still producing. The famous Treadwell mines are on Douglas Island and have recently had a



similar experience. About a year ago they also were flooded and sustained a serious loss.

I have already said that it is not my purpose to go into detail in regard to the mines and the other industries of the North. I wish only to reveal the opportunities which lie waiting for him who is alert for business chances. When the new railroad is completed any able-bodied man who has energy, initiative and ambition can get into the interior of this rich country at little expense. And if it were generally known how many hundred prospectors are laying their plans to be there during this present year (1918) the lag-gard would bestir himself! It can not be long until *all* the industries of Alaska will be opened up upon a large scale. The climate, while severe at times, need not deter any well man or woman from going. People here dress for the weather. Real suffering from cold is seldom known. Nobody has "bad colds" in Alaska. The cold is dry and invigorating. Nowhere on earth will one find men and women of such perfect health. Nowhere will one see sturdier, healthier, more rosy-cheeked children. Moreover, novelists and playwrights to the contrary, the living and working conditions here are governed by the very same principles and laws as those of other lands. Any man or woman can get on in Alaska just as long



**SLUICING THE WINTER DUMP AT FAIRBANKS**



**THE THIRD BEACH AT NOME FROM WHICH WAS TAKEN  
MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF GOLD IN DUST AND NUGGETS**



**ONE NIGHT'S CATCH. NEARLY FIVE THOUSAND SALMON  
WEIGHING APPROXIMATELY 75,000 POUNDS**



**A FISHWHEEL**

as he or she is "on the square." Otherwise either of them, in my judgment, will, in time, come to grief anywhere.

As was the case with the railroads, the government was up against the proposition of government ownership or private monopoly in regard to the rich coal fields of Alaska. When their value was discovered, capitalists and entry men with speculative tendencies swooped down upon the coal treasures of the country, horse, foot and dragoon. For a time it seemed that the entire potential wealth of the land was to have the usual fate,—that of being brought under monopolistic control.

The United States Government has ill repaid Theodore Roosevelt for much that he has done. But Alaskans will not forget and the United States will one day realize what he did for them in this particular instance. When he saw what was about to happen, with his characteristic method of doing things first and asking permission afterward, he withdrew every acre of coal-bearing land in Alaska from entry! This was nearly fifteen years ago. Alaska sat helpless and gnashed her teeth while legislation fought with politics and speculation wrestled with finance.

Being able to see the absurdity which never fails to appear in such crises and to laugh at it

has saved many a man from losing his chances of going to Heaven! One day in 1913 I chanced to be at Dutch Harbor where the battleship *Maryland* was coaling. Had the *Maryland* carried a gun such as the German one which fired on Paris on Good Friday of the present year she might have fired a volley which could have landed squarely in the Matanuska coal fields! There was nothing funny in the situation to an Alaskan, of course, but I was moved to unseemly mirth when I saw that *Pocahontas* coal from *Virginia* going into her bunkers! We in Alaska (*miserere!*) were importing coal for our own use from Washington, California and—Australia!

Now, however, Alaska has her reward. The Secretary of the Interior has re-opened the coal fields for entry. But permission is given only to *lease* the coal tracts. Before this book appears the first Alaskan coal will be helping to fill the bunkers, not only of Alaska herself but of the Pacific coast as well.

There is one noticable thing about the conditions imposed upon the lessees of the coal fields by Secretary Lane and it is a point upon which both the prospective lessee and employee should be informed. These conditions provide for the safeguarding of the lives and welfare of the miners. No operator may mine coal at minimum

cost without regard for the safety of his men. The rules are explicit. The lease requires him to "leave ample support for the roof of the drifts and stopes, to provide adequate ventilation, special exits, to guard against explosion, flooding, 'squeezes' and fire." The protection of the workman goes even further than this. No firm, or individual, operating in government land, may work the miners longer than eight hours a day. They must agree to pay them twice a month in cash. The forced buying at stores owned by the company is strictly prohibited. The operators, at the request of a majority of the miners, must grant one of their number, chosen by vote, permission to check and weigh the coal in cases where the miners' pay is based upon their output.

Wise provisions these! The stormy and bloody history of the Colorado fields is to have no repetition here if the foresight and the good judgment of the Department of the Interior can prevent it. All these things lend to the desirability of employment in Alaska. There are only two spots in the country where the coal lands are in possession of individuals or of private companies. Every other inch of it belongs to the government. And it will keep on belonging to it! The Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Franklin K. Lane, is the largest operating landlord in the

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world. While you may not buy coal land in Alaska you may lease it—for not more than fifty years. For each ton mined you pay a royalty to the government. You may then ship your coal in a government coal-car! One can see how easy it will be for a lessee to make money in coal in Alaska. All he has to do is to dig! No speculating in coal lands! No shifting and juggling of stocks and bonds of coal-carrying railroads! So far as the coal fields and mining in Alaska are concerned neither money, politics nor influence will avail to change the situation one jot or one tittle! Amen! Hallelujah!! Waltz me around again, Willie!!!

With farm and mineral lands, however, it is different. These may pass into the hands of private companies or individuals just as soon as the latter can qualify to meet the conditions. We who know the country can realize as outsiders can not what the railroad will mean to Alaska. One may take a boat at the mouth of the Yukon, traveling westward to southward, thence up the Tanana until he reaches Fairbanks which is within a hundred miles of the Arctic Circle. Here the new railroad will have its northern terminus. One may then take the train back to Seward, riding through the great gold country—a section the wealth of which is uncomputed—then on

through the enormous coal fields, past farms laden with crops, finding himself, when the end of the journey is reached, at Seward, the terminus on the Peninsula, after a journey (not including the water voyage) of four hundred and fifty miles.

In proportion as commerce and industry grow opportunities for labor will increase. The omnipresent automobile will bring with it the necessity for the garage, the repair shop, the chauffeur, the mechanic. The railroad terminals mean new towns and new towns mean business houses. Wherever there is a road in process of construction there is always a chance for women. The workmen must be fed and provided with sleeping quarters. Boarding houses, laundries, etc., are indispensable. But——. I should not be honest either with myself or with my readers if I did not here utter one word of warning. No woman need be afraid to go to Alaska, but both men and women should go wisely and in full understanding of conditions there. Both *must* be equipped to meet those conditions. The first is the promise, oral or written, of a job before going! The other is the means to return home at any time. No one should go to Alaska without having first provided for one or both of these conditions.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE HAUNT OF THE SALMON

**T**HE greatest industry in Alaska is unquestionably the salmon fishing. More than two hundred and fifty kinds of edible fish abound in Alaskan waters and this does not include trout and grayling in the streams where only the latter are to be found. Most of the halibut eaten in the United States comes from Alaska. These fish often weigh as high as two hundred pounds. Large numbers of whales are caught and prepared for market annually. The fish products of the country have already netted more than two hundred million dollars.

Nothing in the history of all Nature is more wonderful (or more tragic) than the story of the salmon. So wonderful is it that it is almost beyond the power of the human brain to comprehend it. Until the advent of the motion picture—one of the greatest educators of our day and generation—few knew that the salmon returns to the very spot where it was spawned to die. After thirty months at sea, during which

time nothing is known of them, they are drawn by some mysterious instinct back to the very spot of their birth. Sometimes the return necessitates a journey of fifteen hundred miles and during that journey nothing is eaten. Fishermen, both white and native, have told me repeatedly that they have never yet found anything in the stomach of a salmon. They leave the ocean and enter the rivers early in the spring. As soon as they enter fresh water they cease eating. Their stomachs shrink as their appetites fail and they have therefore no desire to return to the salt-water feeding-grounds. When they reach their destination they reproduce, which is the object of the long journey. Shortly afterward they die. Life, seemingly, is complete for them when they have reached the waters which gave them birth and have transmitted life to others. This done, they drop down the river with the current and are seen no more. From three to four hundred eggs to each pound of the parent fish is the average spawn. And yet——. The artificial propagation of the salmon goes on ceaselessly. It is compared to the sowing of seed by the farmer. The culture of the eggs in a hatchery and the distribution of fingerlings lay the foundation for an increased harvest year by year.

To me the return of the salmon to the spawn-

ing grounds is the most marvelous thing in the world. From its source in the snow-capped mountains of the interior to the spot where it flows, bell-toned and majestic, into the sea, the Yukon with its various tributaries is more than twenty-five hundred miles long! And the water is muddy. The fish wheels, useless in clear water, are in constant motion. How, then, does the salmon determine the exact spot at which to leave the river and enter the particular tributary from which, originally, it came? Only once has it been in it before,—the time when as a fingerling of two or three inches it made its first swift journey out to sea! What man, even if he had all manner of landmarks to guide him, would undertake to return to the spot he left in childhood if in order to do so he had to leave the broad ocean and follow twenty-five hundred miles of water which is first river, then tributary, then creek, then brook and finally a lake? It is not worth while to try to reduce the thing to intelligible terms. It is incomprehensible. No human intelligence can explain the spawning migration of the salmon. Yet long-continued and careful investigation and observation in every stream of the Pacific coast have established these facts beyond question.

He who has never seen a “run” of salmon has

something yet to live for! I know of no other event which equals it. The heaviest runs are in May, June, and July, the catch being largest in the latter month. The largest fish are caught in May. The "royal family" of salmon is the King. These are best in June. Often they weigh from fifty to eighty pounds. The king salmon never rises to the fly. The canneries take them by the wheel.

I shall never forget my first view of a fish wheel and a cannery. I thought the wheel the nearest approach to an infernal machine that I had ever seen—until I got into the cannery! The wheels are fashioned of wire-gauze compartments and are built in places near high-water mark where salmon are known to run in greatest numbers, usually at the head of natural or artificial channels in the river bed. "Like a cradle endless rocking" the wheel revolves, scooping up the unsuspecting and beautiful creatures literally by thousands. It is the blackest and bloodiest of murder. Nothing else! But——. In the "Outside" they insist on eating salmon and the canneries can not supply the demand without the wheel.

Kipling, in his *American Notes*, says that he saw a ton of salmon taken on the Columbia River as one night's catch from the revolving cups of a

giant wheel. My own first sight of a fish wheel in operation beats the story of this renowned writer all to pieces. The proprietor announced that the catch of this night was *five tons*, an amount which taxes the credulity of any man in his right mind. With a fascination which no words can describe I watched those fish being unloaded. Huge fifty-pounders, hardly dead, scores weighing from twenty to thirty pounds and myriads of smaller ones! The warehouse, built on piles in the bend of the river, was not far away, and as I was there for the purpose of seeing the process from first to last, I, went aboard the barge onto which the salmon had been tossed. Presently we drew up alongside the warehouse and unloaded the fish. Like a man hypnotized I followed my guide up the scale-strewn, fishy incline which led into the cannery.

None but natives worked in this particular cannery. The building shook and shivered with every chug of the machinery. I watched them cross and re-cross the slippery floor and I could think of nothing but the Devil and a blood-be-spattered Devil at that!

My experience up to this moment, however, was not a circumstance to what happened next! When the boxes containing the fish were thrown down under a jet of water they broke of their

own accord and the salmon burst into a stream of silver. A native jerked one up, a twenty-pounder, deftly beheaded and detailed it in two swift strokes of a knife. With equal deftness he relieved it of its internal arrangements by a third stroke. Then he tossed it into a bloody-dyed tank. The headless, tailless, *insideless* fish fairly leaped from his hands—just as though it were once more taking the rapids. But not so. The next man caught him up short. What the first man had left undone the second one polished off to a fine degree. He proceeded to commit additional murder of the most damnable sort. He thrust the fish under a machine resembling a chaff-cutter which hewed and hacked it into unseemly red pieces ready for the can and the poor mutilated remains were ready for the third man.

With long, bony, crooked fingers he jammed the pieces into cans which, sliding down a marvelous machine, forthwith proceeded to solder their own tops as they passed! The fourth man tested the can for flaws and then it was sunk (with hundreds of others) into a vat of boiling water to be cooked for a few minutes. The cans bulged slightly after this operation and were slidden along on trolleys to the fifth man who with a needle and soldering iron vented them

and then soldered the little aperture. The process was finished—all except the label. This attached, the “finest salmon on the market” was ready for shipment.

In Alaska we get used to almost everything in time, but I confess that it took me some time to pull myself together after this experience. Never had I been so conscious of the grim contrasts of life as when I stepped outside that cannery! In that rude factory, the floor of which was but forty by ninety feet, I had seen the most civilized and the most murderous machinery! Outside, only a few feet away, before my eyes lay the most beautiful of God’s country,—the immense solitude of the hills! I fairly fled down to the launch by which I was to journey back down the river, trying to get as far away as possible from the slippery, scale-spangled, oily floors and the blood-bespattered Eskimos. But it was like a doctor’s first surgical operation. I got over it, and after several years’ residence in the country became so accustomed to the sights of a cannery that they now make little or no impression. The canneries are Alaska’s greatest asset.

To state how many cans of salmon go out yearly would be an impossible task. All we know is that the value of the Alaskan salmon fisheries

can not be computed. It is true that Alaska derives much of her wealth from the copper, gold and silver mines and her practically untouched coal deposits. But her fisheries are the most important of her industries. Mines have a way of giving out suddenly, for no apparent reason. But the fish reproduce themselves each year. The fisheries of Alaska can not fail.

Next to the fisheries the fur business is perhaps the most important industry. Here again is a business opening for him who seeks it. As very warm clothing is necessary, tanners ought to find the land full of opportunities. The fur business is perhaps the *easiest* way to affluence which presents itself in Alaska. Native hunters and trappers follow the old rule and hunt their prey from Nature's supply. But many have already gone into the raising of fur-bearing animals as a business, just as the farmer raises sheep for the wool.

Fox farming is the most popular and a great industry is being developed. Many who began this business in Alaska have since transported it to the States. In the west are some twelve or fifteen such institutions and the eastern States also contain a few. The value of the fox fur is known to all and, as has been said, from four to



seven hundred dollars is not an unusual price for the black and silver fox skins.

Judge Martin F. Moran, of the Kobuk district, is experimenting in angora goat-raising in which he thinks there is a great future. Judge Moran lives twenty miles north of the Arctic Circle. Since the breaking out of the war angora ranchers in the west have netted large fortunes by supplying mohair, and conditions for raising the goats are less favorable there than in Alaska. Judge Moran is planning (and has perhaps already carried out his plan) to import a herd of angoras which shall graze upon the rich reindeer moss which grows so abundantly in the tundra of western and northern Alaska.

The sea-otter, the most valuable fur-bearing animal, may not now be hunted, according to a law enacted by Congress, until November first, 1920. These were formerly numerous, but they are now threatened with extinction and are to be found only on some of the Aleutian Islands. It has been estimated that during the Russian occupation two hundred and sixty thousand sea-otter skins were taken, valued at twenty-six million dollars. Since the United States took over the country in 1867 about ninety thousand have been marketed. Now, however, the output is only about twenty skins a year. A good otter skin is

very valuable, ranging in price from eight hundred to eighteen hundred dollars.

The seal-fur industry, although developed by the Russians, reached its height after the territory was acquired by the United States. From 1867 to 1902 seal skins to the value of thirty-five million dollars were exported. The fur seal, although widely distributed throughout the country, has but one breeding place,—the Pribilof Islands. Here most of the skins are taken. The seals were slaughtered in the most ruthless fashion and the government at last awoke to the knowledge that the seal was in a fair way to follow the sea-otter unless protected. In 1870 the capture of seals on these islands was prohibited by law. The United States took charge of the islands and the fisheries. Natives may kill annually only enough seals to provide themselves with food and clothing. The destruction of the herds was thus halted by the government and in 1912 the census revealed two hundred and fifteen thousand, nine hundred and forty seals.

From the sale of fox furs and seal skins the government has derived during the last twenty-five years a direct revenue almost covering the total purchase price of Alaska. There are approximately twenty thousand white people in the

**territory. In China there are four hundred million. Yet in 1915 the United States trade with Alaska was five million dollars in excess of the total United States trade with China!**

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD

**A**LASKA is a land of scenic splendor. She has scenery as beautiful as that of Switzerland or New Zealand. From my own cottage doorway I have seen sunsets which equaled those of Mont Blanc, famed in song and story, and I have traveled through valleys which in summer rivaled the celebrated Vale of Chamounix. Whoever it was who selected the Seven Wonders of the World of which we learned in our school days would have had to add to the list if he had ever dwelt for any length of time "north of fifty-three."

The country boasts some of the greatest wonders of Nature. The Calico Bluffs on the Yukon are as high as the Washington monument and their strata look much like agate formations. She has five thousand glaciers which are giants in comparison with those of the Alps. The Childs Glacier is as tall as the dome of the capital at Washington. Of the hundreds of others there are many that are known as "first class" glaciers.

By this is meant that they discharge their contents into the sea direct. Among them are the LeConte, Dawes, Brown, Sawyer and Taku. It is the latter which furnishes the bergs that surround the ships which carry travelers northward through the "Inside" route. From the deck of the vessel, near Taku Inlet, forty-five glaciers may be counted. Of these, as you face Taku, Norris glacier stands to the left. It is unique in that it sends out two seemingly full-grown rivers, one flowing to north and one to south. Flowers may be seen growing in the forest glades nearby, and remnants of tree stumps two feet in diameter reveal that the glacier must once have withdrawn long enough at least to permit them to grow. Then a change of climate or other natural action must have pushed the ice forward again to cut them off and grind them into fragments, —making them a part of the glacial débris.

Mendenhall Glacier is near Juneau. It is easily reached by automobile and a delightful experience it is to ride along the highway leading to it. The road is fringed with masses of wild flowers. Imagine, if you can, sitting in the shade of a gigantic cottonwood, or spruce, and eating ice cream made from the milk of cows which now pasture upon the grass where once the ice stood a thousand feet deep! Mendenhall, according

to the best authorities, is at least twenty-five miles long,—almost twice the length of the largest glacier the Alps affords.

The highest mountain peak in Alaska was known to the Russians as *Bulshaiia* and to the natives of Cook Inlet as *Traleika*. Both words signify the “great” or the “high” mountain. The natives of the interior called it *Denali*, but in 1895 it was named Mt. McKinley. It is twenty thousand three hundred feet high, exceeded in height only by Aconcagua of South America and Mt. Everest in Indo-China. It was named by W. A. Dickey, who saw it from the Susitna River. Later its position and altitude were determined. Many have attempted to ascend it. In 1912 Prof. Herschel Parker of Columbia University and Mr. Belmore Browne of Tacoma, Washington, got within three hundred feet of the summit, and in 1913, Rev. Hudson Stuck, Archdeacon of the Yukon and author of *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* and *Voyages on the Yukon*, together with three companions, reached the top.

Above the recently-created National Park Mt. McKinley towers in majestic sublimity, the everlasting sentinel, the guardian, as it were, of the last and loveliest spot on earth which remains as

Nature fashioned it, still untouched by human hands.

Mt. St. Elias is better known and has been much written about. Its height is eighteen thousand and twenty-four feet. Mt. Logan is nineteen thousand five hundred and forty feet. Of the two now-celebrated passes in the mountains of the Yukon, the Chilkoot and White Pass, the former is at a height of three thousand one hundred feet and the latter at a height of twenty-eight hundred feet. It was over these passes that the gold-seekers of 1898 stampeded into Klondike.

But the mountains of Alaska, glorious, majestic and awe-inspiring as they are, are the losers when compared with the greatest of Alaskan wonders, the volcanoes. Of these, Mt. Katmai, opposite the Island of Kodiak, the terrific eruption of which in June, 1912, is well remembered, is most celebrated. At that time a mass of ash and pumice, the volume of which is estimated at *five cubic miles*, was thrown into the air. It buried an area about the size of the State of Connecticut to a depth varying from ten inches to ten feet and smaller amounts of the ash fell as far as nine hundred miles away. Unquestionably, the notoriously cold, wet summer which followed the eruption was due to the fine dust which

was thrown into the higher regions of the atmosphere to such an extent as to have a profound effect upon the weather. At the time of the eruption I was at sea, on my way from St. Michael to the States. It was not long until the ash began falling over us, filling the air and seemingly trying to cover the face of the waters. It got into our lungs and made them ache. It was not until some time later that I heard that it was Mt. Katmai which had exploded and that the eruption was one which would go down in history. There was not, of course, the enormous loss of life which followed the eruptions of Vesuvius, Stromboli and Mt. Pélee. But in other respects the explosion of Mt. Katmai was unique. Kodiak, the town which was buried, was a hundred miles away. Ash fell as far away as Juneau, Ketchikan and the Yukon valley, distant respectively six hundred, seven hundred and fifty and nine hundred miles.

In the report of the leader of the National Geographic Society's Mt. Katmai Expedition of 1915-'16, Robert F. Griggs, of the Ohio State University, is the following paragraph which gives concisely a good idea of the magnitude of the explosion:

"Such an eruption of Vesuvius would bury Naples under fifteen feet of ash. Rome would



be covered a foot deep. The sound would be heard at Paris. Dust from the crater would fall in Brussels and Berlin and the fumes would be noticeable far beyond Christiana, Norway."

Yet it was only a little over a year after this eruption that I myself saw those ash-laden hills covered again with green verdure! The native blue-top hay was growing right through the ash which had been washed off the hills and was then covering the land a foot and a half deep. I was deeply interested in the native method of harvesting this hay. In the pursuit of agriculture as I understood it I had never encountered this practice elsewhere. The hay was cut high up on the mountain. It was done into bundles in fish nets and was then sent tumbling down the mountain-side to the bottom. There it was picked up and carried off homeward or else loaded on boats to be shipped elsewhere.

At the time of the eruption the natives, fortunately for them, were all away fishing. They were never permitted to return to their mountain. The government built them a new town and conveyed them thither in a body, thus establishing them in it. The village was not near the crater. It was about twenty-five miles away. This is five times as far distant from the volcano

as Pompeii was from Vesuvius or St. Pierre from Mt. Pélee.

As has been said, the verdure has returned. Around Kodiak it is vividly, beautifully green. But the Katmai Valley, once fertile and now a barren waste, contains what the writer firmly believes to be the most wonderful and awe-inspiring sight in the whole world. On the second visit of the Expedition of the National Geographic Society, the following year, Prof. Griggs explored and named it. He called it "The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes"—than which there could be no better name!

There are no words in the language capable of giving any definite impression of the scene. Stretching away as far as the eye can see, until the valley is lost in the far-distant mountains, lie literally thousands of small volcanos, replicas in miniature of Katmai, the Great! From almost every one of them shoots a slender column of steam which rises steadily and gracefully, sometimes to a height of a thousand feet before it breaks or even wavers! Words become futile. One could not exaggerate it if he tried. There would not be an adjective left in the language when he finished!

My own view of the valley was hasty, superficial and from a respectful distance! I can well

appreciate, however, what the Expedition endured in order to give to the world knowledge of this wondrous spot. I heartily commend to the readers of this volume the report of Prof. Griggs in the National Geographic Magazine for May, 1917, in which he relates the experience of himself and his party as they made their way back and forth, plunging through suffocating vapors, trapping gases for chemical analysis, making soundings, mapping the course of the valley and studying the geology of what he calls "the most amazing example of her processes which Nature has yet revealed to twentieth century man,—one of Vulcan's melting pots from which the earth was created." In a tent less than two miles from one of the huge clouds of steam he slept at night and on one of the large flat stones outside, so hot that it was a natural stove, the members of the Expedition cooked their food.

One gets the best idea of the magnitude of the valley by comparing it with our Yellowstone Park. The Katmai valley is thirty-two miles long, about two miles wide and seventy square miles in area. In the Yellowstone are four thousand hot springs and a hundred geysers scattered over three thousand square miles. The geysers occur in isolated basins the total area of which is hardly twenty miles. The largest one, and it

plays but seldom, shoots up a column about three hundred feet high. Old Faithful, which is the only one the tourist can ever be sure of seeing in action, is only a hundred feet high. In the Alaskan valley, however, observe the contrast. *There are thousands of vents in constant action.* Some of these ascend more than five thousand feet into the air when conditions are good and when the valley is wind-swept they creep along the ground for two or three miles! These vents are not geysers. They are hot springs. Geysers can exist only when the rock through which they break is sufficiently cool to permit water to form. It is unlikely therefore that there will ever be geysers here,—at least not for many centuries. The valley may gradually cool so as to permit their formation. But it will be ages hence.

Prof. Griggs is emphatic in his belief that there is nothing known to mankind with which "The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes" can be compared. I agree with him. Would that it were more accessible to the traveler and that no tourist would return from a sojourn in Alaska without seeing it! I shall never cease to be grateful that a fortunate circumstance permitted me to obtain even so small a peep at it. Surely nothing approaching it has been seen by man upon this earth. The Expedition report states,

among other interesting things, that the water is so hot that the thermometer would not register it and that the heat from the stones would char a piece of wood instantly!

Kilauea, in Hawaii, has always borne the reputation of being king of volcanoes. It is now dethroned. Mention has already been made of Mt. Shishaldin, on Unimak Island. As no geographer has ever visited it, little is known about it. Katmai, however, is unquestionably the monarch. Not so much in diameter, circumference or area does it exceed Kilauea. It is in depth. Kilauea's greatest depth is five hundred feet. Katmai's is thirty-seven hundred feet!

In an attempt to give some idea of the magnitude of Katmai, I quote once more from Prof. Griggs' report:

"If every single structure in New York, Brooklyn, the Bronx and the other boroughs of Greater New York were gathered together and deposited in the crater of Mt. Katmai," he says, "the hole that remained would still be *more than twice as large as that of Kilauea.*" The king is dead. Long live the king—of volcanoes!

From the glaciers and the mountains of Alaska to the rivers is but a natural turn. One of the most important factors in the life and commercial development of a country is, of course, her

river navigation. Alaska has two great gateways to Bering Strait,—the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. Until recently only the Yukon was available for commercial purposes, but the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey has announced that at last a channel has been charted through the delta of the Kuskokwim. This means much. It means that a River of Doubt has become a River of Promise!

Because of the latitude at which they enter Bering Sea the Yukon is navigable for three and a half and the Kuskokwim for four months only. The entrance of the Yukon is shallow, that of the Kuskokwim tortuous and not well known. But once inside, an ordinary river boat can navigate the Yukon to White Horse, in Canada, a distance of twenty-two hundred miles. In spite of the short seasons the possibilities of using the river in the development of the valley are apparent and will suffice for some time to come. Navigation is also fairly good on the lower Copper River, the Kobuk, and smaller streams. When it comes to the most winding and tortuous watercourse I have ever encountered, however,—respectfully I salute the Iditarod! One's supply of adjectives, however ample under ordinary circumstances, fails him completely when he attempts to do justice to the crookedness of this river. It writhes

and twists and turns like some huge serpent, and when it can think of nothing else to do it doubles back on its own track! To try to follow it would give a man delirium tremens, and like Tennyson's brook it "goes on forever!"

The Pacific coast line, including the Aleutian Islands, has many excellent harbors. With the exception of Cook Inlet, these are open to navigation from November until June, but the ice pack does not extend far south of St. Lawrence Island. This part of the coast is almost without harbors. The Arctic Ocean is open from July to September, permitting navigation to Alaskan ports.

There is cable communication between Seattle and certain parts of southeastern Alaska,—Cordova, Valdez and Seward. Telegraph lines run from Valdez to Fairbanks and down the Yukon to St. Michael from which point there is wireless communication with Nome. These are all military lines. The Navy Department maintains wireless stations at Kodiak and Unalaska. The War Department has wireless stations at Sitka, Cordova, Fairbanks, Circle, Eagle and Nulato. There are also private wireless stations at Iditarod and on Bristol Bay and many of the mining districts are now provided with telephone lines.

The United States Government is thoroughly

awake to the necessity of making safe the now-dangerous waters of southern Alaska. They are now being charted and soon the old title "The Graveyard of the Pacific" will no longer apply to them. Within the past sixty years three hundred ships have gone down upon the rocks. Valuable cargoes amounting to eight million dollars and lives to the number of five hundred have here been lost. Both to southeast and southwest of Alaska lie many mountainous islands, and oft-times the lower half of the mountain will be lost in the water. Like the submerged lower half of the iceberg which wrecked the *Titanic*, they lie in wait, seemingly, for the ignorant or the unwary and rip open the hulls of the ships that venture too near.

The light-house service of Alaska leaves much to be desired. The first buoy was floated in 1884. The first light was put up ten years later. There are three hundred and twenty-nine aids to navigation now on the whole Alaskan coast line. These include a hundred and forty lights of which twenty-eight were placed in 1915. On the much-traveled route from Icy Strait to Nome, a distance equal to that between New York and London, there are but three lighthouses!

There are indications of improvement along this line, however. A first class light is to be



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placed on Cape St. Elias. New vessels are being built for light-house work and for the Coast Survey, but like all great enterprises, things progress slowly. About one-half of the main channels of southeastern Alaska have been explored by a wire drag and as rapidly as the appropriations by Congress will permit the work will be pushed forward.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CITIES OF THE FAR NORTH

**O**F the cities of Alaska the most interesting historically is Sitka. No one will regret the time spent in visiting this, the former seat of the Russian territorial government and the stronghold of the Greek Catholic Church. After the passing of the Russians it became the first capital of Alaska. It is situate on Baranof Island, facing Sitka Sound. The climate is mild and out-door life delightful.

Sitka is beautifully picturesque. The island-laden ocean sweeps to west of it while on the east the frothing Indian River surges down from its birthplace in the group of snow-capped mountains known as the Seven Sisters. In 1799 the Russians established a trading post here and occupied it until 1804. The old Greek church dating from 1816 still stands, alongside of a new one called St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, erected in 1899. The city contains much that is of interest,—a Museum named in honor of Sheldon Jackson of the Presbyterian Mission. To the influence of

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this man Alaska is indebted for her now-thriving reindeer industry. During the rush to the gold fields in 1898 word was borne to Washington that the gold-seekers were dying by thousands for lack of food and proper clothing to protect them from the bitter climate into which, in their inexperience, they had entered inadequately equipped. In the effort to aid them the government attempted to send supplies to the starving camps by reindeer. The plan was not a success and the government was left with the reindeer on its hands. Dr. Jackson used his influence with the result that the reindeer were secured for the Eskimos.

Sitka has United States Public Schools. It has also a Presbyterian Industrial Training School for natives. It is the headquarters of the Agricultural Experiment stations, the Coast Survey Magnetic Base Station, and is the residence of both the Russian and Episcopal Bishops of Alaska.

Juneau, the present capital, is also most picturesquely located. From the water it seems to be lying on a shelf,—the cliffs of Mt. Juneau to the rear and the sea in front of it. It is about a hundred miles north by east of Sitka, on Gastineau Channel, opposite Douglas Island on which are situate the celebrated Treadwell mines. Ju-



**SITKA, THE OLD RUSSIAN CAPITAL OF ALASKA**



**JUNEAU, THE CAPITAL**



**ESKIMOS OF ST. MICHAEL**

neau is thoroughly modern as to churches, schools, newspapers, hospitals. It has drainage, police and fire protection, telephone and telegraph service and electric light. A small town of sixteen hundred inhabitants in 1910, it has increased to a thriving city. The ever-increasing population is fast dotting the lower heights with beautiful and comfortable homes and down below them the ever-advancing tunnels of the gold-seekers keep honey-combing the rock-ribbed earth. As one journeys northward he can see the stamp house of the Treadwell mines, built right into the side of the precipitous face of the mountain down which a railroad track has been laid to carry the ore from the tunnels that bore into the heart of the cliff.

Ketchikan is a city of commercial importance because of the fishing industry. It is typical of the settlements along the coast and of the fishing settlements in particular. It also is located on an island which gives it many advantages. On one side it has deep water. On the other side it has mountain, river and lake. Ketchikan is one of the best places for the visitor to see a "run" during which the salmon crowd up the river in a struggle so fierce that many of them are killed in the effort to reach the spawning-grounds.

The most attractive city of this part of the

country is Wrangell, named for the Russian explorer and naval officer, Baron Ferdinand Wrangell, wise administrator of affairs connected with the Alaskan colonies of Russia between 1831 and 1836. During his administration an observatory was established at Sitka. He it was who exposed the shameful abuses of the Russian-American Company and prevented the extension of their charter in 1862. He was an astute and far-sighted statesman, and realizing the value of Alaska, he bitterly opposed the sale of the territory to the United States.

Wrangell, the city named after him, lies on an island of the same name a hundred and fifty miles southeast of Juneau. The seeker after the unusual in his travels will find here much to interest and divert him. To Wrangell the traders still bring the trophies of the chase, making their journey down the rapidly-flowing Stikine river from the wonderful Cassiar hunting grounds, famed for their big game. To these grounds every year flock hunters from all parts of the world to shoot the mountain sheep, the moose, the bear and the caribou. In Wrangell, also, one may see the best of what remains of the magnificent totem poles of Alaska.

No lover of history, and particularly the history of the native peoples of the world, can help

cherishing a feeling of deep regret when he sees the approaching decay of these expressions of their inner lives. As is the case in our own great west, the steam roller of civilization is passing over what is left of the primitive people, crushing out the spirit of all that once was and in some cases still is revered by them, flattening out that which is picturesque and distinctive in them. Who can look upon the massive-timbered communal houses of the natives of Alaska, before which were placed the totem poles, bold with their blazonry of animals, grotesquely carved and gaudily painted,—eagle and whale, bear, wolf and beaver—without a sigh that soon they, too, will sail into the past with the caravels of Columbus or ride out of the plains with the buffalo to return no more?

Through the long ages the American Indian has worshiped—not the sun, but the great, *creative spirit* behind the sun! And he has expressed that worship in the celebrated Sun Dance, a truly *religious* ceremony in which he is now forbidden to indulge by the United States government! In like manner the natives of the Far North expressed themselves in totems. To a certain extent they are ancestor worshipers, as are the Chinese. The totem poles are their expression of their primitive heraldry. They erected them



in front of their rude dwellings, with a pageantry uncouth, it is true, but in a spirit of sincerity.

I am not one of those who would decry the influence and the splendid service of the missionary. But it is an influence which often works both ways. Many of the latter can see in these expressions of pride of ancestry nothing but the most arrant heathenism, so the totem poles of Alaska are rotting away. And no more are being built. The young natives are being "educated" out of any respect which hitherto they may justly have entertained for their forefathers. There is no scorn known to the human race which is quite so withering as that which the man who does not know who his grandfather was entertains for the man who does!

It can not be long until the totem pole will be a thing of the past. Therefore he who would see them in all their glory must not linger. All will soon be gone. Here at Wrangell are still some splendid specimens, perhaps the best the north country now has to offer.

Skagway may be called the city of romance. Time was when it held the key which unlocked the gateway of the Promised Land,—that golden kingdom of the North. It is now a thriving commercial center. The White Pass railroad begins here, forming a sort of portage by means of

which the two extremes of the country may shake hands with each other. The railroad itself is short. But it touches the headwaters of the Yukon with its twenty-five hundred miles of navigation, bearing on its broad bosom the commerce and the traffic of Klondike, Dawson, and Fairbanks, to the outlet in Bering Sea.

But this is not the reason the history of Skagway is romantic. When the gold rush began in 1896 the landing had to be made at Dyea at the other end of the Lynn Canal. From here it was necessary to cross the dangerous Chilkoot Pass, a most hazardous undertaking. One day the word was passed along that another pass (now known as White Pass) had been discovered. With a rush like a flock of frightened sheep the gold seekers turned and went the other way. *In one day* fifteen thousand people left Dyea for Dawson and Skagway and in that same length of time what had formerly been a swamp became a city!

Abler pens than mine have recorded in novel, poem and play the story of those eventful days. All know now of the famous (or infamous) gambling hells with which these places were infested. The spot in Skagway to-day which most attracts the tourist is the cemetery where lies the body of "Soapy" Smith. "Soapy" was half-outlaw, half-

politician, the "Boss" of the town, in fact. Skagway was without doubt the wildest and wickedest place in the world during the reign of "Soapy" Smith. The decent and sober citizens stood it as long as they could. When they felt, however, that Skagway had suffered from her evil reputation long enough they held a meeting and came to a decision! The Sylvester Wharf, now a half-ruin, has been left standing to mark the spot where the fathers of the town ran "Soapy" to cover and shot him.

Dawson, in the Canadian Yukon, had a somewhat similar experience. But the Northwest Mounted Police came to her assistance and brought order out of chaos. The fame of Dawson during the gold rush is world-wide. Her affairs are now in the charge of the Canadian government. There is also a United States Consulate there.

The most important and the largest city in Alaska is Fairbanks. It lies on the Tanana River, practically at the head of navigation. It is the site of the Fourth Judicial District and of government activities in the interior of Alaska. Fairbanks is a city of which any country might be proud, heated by a central steam plant, with schools, churches, hospitals, newspapers, long-distance telephone and wireless stations. The

electric plant which lights the city also serves the adjacent mining camps. Fairbanks may be reached all during the year by a stage service three hundred and fifty-four miles from Valdez and during five months in summer steamboat service westward to St. Michael, eastward to Dawson and White Horse, Yukon Territory, is maintained. Reference has already been made to the progress of this delightful city, its social life and the kindly spirit of the people.

As one nears the western coast the cities become few and far between. Anchorage, on Cook Inlet, Iditarod and Nome are the most important. The interesting story of Nome is well known. Prospectors were working the streams for gold when suddenly the yellow dust was found in huge quantities in the sand along the beach! The first settlement was called Anvil City and was the usual mushroom affair. Nowhere else in Alaska was the struggle of the gold-seekers to be compared with those of Nome. Its exposed position on Norton Sound made it subject to the violent coast storms. The conditions were unsanitary, the food and fuel supply a subject of great anxiety, the water supply scanty and the climate cruel. In the face of all these discouragements, however, the hardy pioneers fought and conquered. Nome is now a city

of some three thousand, the commercial, judicial and educational center of Seward Peninsula. It is a fine, courageous little city, compactly built, with modern improvements and prosperous business houses. A railroad eighty-five miles long runs to Shelton, but Nome and the adjacent regions are reached direct only between June and October, the open season of Bering Sea.

I always learn with regret of any tourist who takes a trip up the "Inside" passage and returns by the same route. What can he possibly know of Alaska? The broad expanse of country which sweeps away to the north and the west, guarded by the mountains, watered by one of the mightiest rivers in the world,—of this he knows nothing, for it is a country which can not be described. It must be seen to be appreciated. It is this part of Alaska that is Nature's gigantic workshop with a job in it for any man who asks! Here new cities are yet to be born, new business enterprises to be established, new farms to be tilled. Here any man who chooses may have that most prized of all possessions,—a home of his own! There is room for all!

## CHAPTER XV

### THE NATIVE RACES

**I**N speaking of the native races of Alaska it is not my purpose to enter into the subject except in so far as it belongs to a book of this character. As was said of the mines, the real student of such subjects will find (in the journals devoted to ethnology) what definite information he seeks. Strangely enough, however, a diligent search has revealed that there is not to be found in any library a book or in any magazine an article dealing with that most unusual custom which prevails among the Eskimos,—the trial marriage. Whether this custom exists among any other natives of the world I do not know. But I think not.

The natives of Alaska are of four groups. First, the *Eskimos*, who dwell in the northern part of the territory in the area near the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea. Second, the *Aleut*, a people closely related to the Eskimos, who are to be found only in the Aleutian Islands and the mainland adjacent thereto. Third, the *Thlinkits*,

who are Indians and confined to the southeastern section of the country known as the Panhandle. Fourth, the *Athabaskans*, of the same stock as the American Indian, who occupy the interior and touch the coast only at Cook Inlet.

The Thlinkits were once the most civilized and at the same time the most warlike of the native tribes. When the Russians came they found them living in well-built log houses and with an organized tribal system. They are to-day of greater intelligence than any of the other native tribes and are skilled craftsmen. The Athabaskans, on the other hand, with the exception of some of the most isolated Eskimo tribes, are the least civilized. Only those on the coast have any kind of tribal organization and this is not countenanced by the United States Government. Like the clansmen of Scotland, they seem to group themselves in families. The Aleuts were once quite prosperous, expert in the taking of the sea-otter, a very difficult animal to catch. The ravages of the Russian fur-traders almost annihilated the native population. They enslaved them and compelled them to capture the sea-otters for them. But the latter are now almost extinct and the Aleuts eke out a precarious existence by fishing and trapping foxes. They

call their habitations *barábaras* and they resemble the igloos of the Eskimos.

It is the latter people that I know best and of whom I would speak most. There are no Indians in St. Michael. The native people here are wholly Eskimos, and one has to live among them to realize the moral descent of a once-fine native race. One must know them in order to comprehend the height from which they have fallen! In winter they live in their igloos. And an igloo is a place so unspeakably filthy that one can scarcely entertain a thought (much less a sight) of it. In summer they live in tents. Yet —. In spite of their uncleanness, in spite of every other argument which may be urged against them, one always finds himself at the end of his ruminations admitting to himself that, after all, they are a fine native race! It is a conclusion at which he never fails to arrive even in the face of appalling evidence. The conviction will not be downed.

I have often walked about their summer camps at St. Michael, Nome and other localities. Always I have found the scene practically the same. One cannot help being struck with the industry which the Eskimos display. Every inmate of the tent will be at work! And each is at work upon something *useful*! Not one of them will



be caught idle. The father usually will be seen carving a piece of ivory, or wood. The Eskimos are skilled carvers. While President Taft was in office a magnificent piece was sent him for his desk. It was carved from the tusk of a walrus by a native. In the tent the mother will be making *mukluks*, or fur boots, while the older daughter beats out and twists the caribou sinew into that strong thread with which the furs and boots are sewed. Let me add that they never come unsewed! The smaller children will each be engaged in some light task, such as making curios, or smoothing the first roughness off of the ivory from which the father, later, will carve something. Every member of the family will be engaged in producing *something of value*. Wherever one goes among the Eskimos he will be struck by this admirable trait.

They are a light-hearted, good-natured people, easily amused. They have a ready smile for you as you pass them by. Compared with the white man they are undersized. From my own six-feet-two they seem rather diminutive to me when I look down upon them, but they are by no means the dwarfs that people imagine them. The average height of the man is five-feet-four. Tall Eskimos are not unusual. They are well-built, graceful in movement and possessed of

small hands and feet. The nose (in some of the tribes) is flat, but in others it is quite the opposite, and the mouth, although somewhat large, is always filled with beautiful teeth. Their smile is most attractive. I have seen many handsome Eskimos,—that is, they would be handsome if they were clean!

The centaur of old was no more a part of his horse than the Eskimo is a part of his boat. He is a born navigator,—as aquatic as a duck. He fashions for himself a small boat of skin in which he practically encloses himself. These boats are of two kinds and in their construction the Eskimo reveals his ingenuity. They are cunningly contrived and cleverly managed. With this primitive craft he performs all sorts of unbelievable stunts. An expert and daring fisherman is he. The smaller boat (called a *kayak*) is a sealskin canoe and is a rather tiny affair. It has circular hatches for one man. The *bidarka* (or *bidocky*) will hold two men. But the *baidará* is made of walrus hide and will hold from twenty to thirty persons. It will live in a heavy sea and is taken on long sea voyages. The stranger who travels even a short distance in one, however, usually does so with his heart in his mouth most of the time. The fabric belies its looks. It appears so flimsy as to be dangerous

and the water is plainly visible underneath. But the natives walk boldly about in them. Every step depresses the skin for two or three inches, but long experience has taught them that the spot on which they stand will sustain the weight of a ton! I have actually seen them turn a summersault in the water with one of these home-made craft and come up smiling! Yet, strange to say, while they are, apparently, more at home on the water than on the land, few of them swim. Perhaps it is that the water is too cold.

Who that has seen these diminutive people venture forth into a treacherous and perilous sea with naught between them and death but this tiny home-made boat to do battle with the huge monsters of the ice-encumbered deep—the whale, the walrus and the seal—can question their courage? Not I! The Eskimo has made no effort to conquer his environment. More wisely he has adapted himself to it and constrained it to his needs. The land of his birth is inhospitable. His environment is savage. He wrings his sustenance from the land only by powerful effort, and human nature takes on a new dignity in the life of such people. Only the sturdiest of creatures, set naked in an Arctic world, could rise superior to such an environment.

As for the Eskimo woman,—in youth she is

not unattractive, often quite good-looking, in fact. But I hereby testify that of all the hideously unattractive and ugly creatures known to the human race the full-blooded, middle-aged Eskimo woman carries off the palm. As it was in the beginning, before God said "Let there be light"—she is without form and void! She ages rapidly. She dresses as do the men, in the *parka*, a long, loose garment reaching to the knee, made of muskrat and reindeer skin in winter and of drill in summer, fur-seal boots and breeches. As the men are nearly always smooth-faced it is often difficult to tell them apart. They both use tobacco. And they are nothing if not economical! They chew it until every particle of flavor has vanished. Then they dry and smoke it!

A friend of mine, a well-known woman writer who once served the American Minister to China as personal secretary, one day confided to me that since the day she left the celestial empire (some fifteen years ago) she had never seen any dirt worth mentioning! Obviously, she has never glimpsed the interior of an igloo! With an American Army Officer of the Medical Corps I once visited one. We were told that it was one of the cleanest Eskimo villages in Alaska. The saints preserve me from a visit to the dirtiest one! An

igloo is a windowless hut, shut tight against the air. It is usually crowded with a large family, grossly clad in skins which are poorly tanned, partly decayed. They are unspeakably fed, greasy of skin. Refuse of every kind was piled about the igloo and a recent thaw made the place a mass of liquid filth.

Of course, the reason for all this is apparent, and in a way unavoidable. Fuel is scarce and hard to obtain. Therefore, ventilation, with its waste of heat, would be fatally extravagant. Food is gathered in summer and stored for winter. When it comes out of storage much of it is decayed. Crowding is unavoidable and this means filth and infection. Water is scanty, cleanliness impossible. All this leads to the prevalence of disease and the disease most prevalent is tuberculosis. Moreover, this village which we visited has no doctor. The nearest one is seven miles away.

Conditions in Alaska, so far as medical relief for the natives is concerned, are distressing and inexcusable. Year after year, with persistent regularity, the Sundry Civil Appropriation Committee of the House strikes out the modest sum of seventy-five thousand dollars petitioned for by the Board of Education for medical relief work among the natives of Alaska. In all southeastern Alaska there is but one hospital for natives,

—a Presbyterian institution at Haines. Dr. Romig, a former Moravian Medical Missionary in the Bristol Bay district in Bering Sea, gave as an estimate that forty per cent of the Eskimo population of this district, numbering some seventeen hundred people, were afflicted with transmissible diseases—chiefly tuberculosis, syphilis and trachoma. The physical condition of these people is pitiable in the extreme. Yet the government provides *one* physician and a small inadequate infirmary without proper equipment and maintained in an abandoned schoolhouse!

Contrast this with what is being done for the Indians of the United States. For the three hundred thousand there are now employed two hundred doctors, eighty nurses, seven dentists, seventy field matrons, and seventy-seven miscellaneous hospital attendants. Also, the government maintains for the Indians forty-nine hospitals, four tuberculosis sanatoria with a capacity for caring for a thousand four hundred and ninety-nine patients! The reason for the striking contrast between this and the shameful neglect of the Alaskan natives ought to be found and removed. The present condition is a reproach to us as a nation. Not only this, it is a menace to the health and safety of the white people already there and an argument against the coming of others.

Much has been said and written of the origin of the Eskimos. There is a difference of opinion as to whence, originally, they came. My own belief is that they are of Mongolian origin. A similarity of language would tend to strengthen this belief. When it comes to a native tongue I confess that the Eskimo has a peculiarity which is unique and baffling, more so than I have ever encountered in any other language. I once got up against this in a manner which took some time to untangle. As United States Commissioner at St. Michael it was part of my duty to try offenders against the law. The first time the offender chanced to be an Eskimo I suddenly discovered that I had troubles of my own. Apparently his *no* meant *yes*, and vice versa. I could not understand it at first, but at last it dawned upon me that although he spoke brokenly in English he was *thinking* in his own tongue. For instance, I would say to him:

"You did so-and-so, didn't you?"

"Yes!" he would reply, when I knew very well that he meant to deny it.

I called in a priest, a man who spoke the native language, from whom I learned that my surmise was correct. The Eskimo, when he says *yes* means "Yes, I did *not*!" When he says *no*

he means "No, I *did!*" There you are! One has to be mentally cross-eyed in order to get him!

The Eskimos are very peaceable people except when (in violation of the law) the white man sells them whisky. It must be acknowledged that the latter has done little to encourage their uplift. In fact, he is largely to blame for the demoralized condition of the Eskimo today. One may no longer sell liquor in Alaska, but the mischief, so far as the natives is concerned, is already done. For a long time there seemed no way to prevent the furnishing of whisky to the Eskimos. A law might cover it, it is true. But experience has taught me that if a man is clever enough and unscrupulous enough he can drive a horse and wagon through the best law that was ever made! Where there was no saloon the liquor was furnished the natives in the guise of pay or bribe, and every man who has lived in Alaska knows how little regard the white man has had for the sanctity of the native home. Wives and daughters were constantly dishonored. If the husband or father protested or put up a fight he was overcome by threats or bribes and given liquor to drink until what natural good qualities he once possessed disappeared forever.

If one would see the native races at their best he must see them as far as possible from the



haunts of the white men. There he will find them by no means an inferior people. I know of one cannery where every employee except the superintendent and the bookkeeper is a native, and one has but to observe their work to be convinced of their capability. But it seems impossible for them to live near the white people without both whites and natives starting down hill. From the acquaintance to the debauchery of the native woman by a certain type of white man is but a step. It has not been a great many years since the whalers used to come up from San Francisco to winter in the Arctic and catch whales. Their first act on arriving was to carry off the native women, take them aboard the vessels and keep them all winter. In the spring when they got ready to return they would throw them ashore unceremoniously. This went on many years but has now been stopped by the government. Sometimes the white men marry the native women and when they do they quickly sink to their level. The native man, always imitative of the white man, in time forsakes the hunting and fishing which once furnished him an honest living and sooner or later he is to be seen hanging around the villages, picking up odd jobs.

Some of the customs of the natives of Alaska (and elsewhere) are both quaint and startling.

When a native guest enters a house neither host nor guest take notice of each other. The host goes on with his work and the visitor either assists him or produces some of his own. When he departs, however, the host says to him:

“Inûvdluaritse!” (Live well!)

But they greet the white visitor in smiling friendliness and when he leaves the host usually says to him:

“Aporniakinatit!” (Do not hurt thy head!)

Presumably this is a warning against the upper part of the low doorway.

The Eskimo's idea of hospitality sometimes extends to lengths which are somewhat appalling and occasionally it requires not a little diplomacy to refuse them without giving offense. When one gets caught in an Eskimo village and has to spend the night there it is the commonest of occurrences for the man of the house to offer him not only the freedom of his home but his wife as well! Among the natives the interchange of wives is common.

And this brings us to that most discussed of all questions,—the morality (or the lack of it) of the native peoples of the earth. No matter to what far corner of the world one may journey he will find this problem the same in all of them. The Eskimo is no exception. Before the com-

ing of the white man he was utterly godless. He had no religion, no form of worship, no imagery, no idea of any "happy hunting ground" hereafter. In many sections this is still true, although they have been brought under the influence of the church in some localities.

In St. Michael the natives are not permitted to live in the village, but their tents dot the hill-sides around and during the summer months the streets are alive with them. Often they come from great distances with their furs, carved ivory, etc., which they have for sale. Their winter dwelling, the igloo, is a pit in the ground, roofed over with logs and sometimes, not always, a window made of fish skin or the entrail of a walrus. The hut is entered by a kind of ante-chamber in the top of which is a hole large enough to admit a man. If he chances to be a large man he sometimes has difficulty in getting through! He must descend a ladder to a narrow passage or tunnel which leads to the principal room, often fifteen or twenty feet from the entrance. The sole furniture of a native residence is a seal-oil lamp which is used for both heating and cooking. It is lighted in the autumn and burns incessantly until spring.

The igloo is usually from six to eight feet high and about thirty feet in circumference. Often

it houses from ten to twenty persons. During the cold and stormy weather every aperture is closed. How they endure the odor and the vitiated air is something no white man can understand. The summer dwellings were formerly constructed above ground and consisted of light poles roofed over with skins. Now, however, these have given way to the ordinary tent which is not only cheaper but preferable for many reasons.

In almost every village, or native settlement, the visitor will find the council-house, a much larger hut than the others. It is called a *kashga*, and is used also as a sort of club where the youths and the unmarried men of the village congregate. Here matters of importance are discussed and guests from a distance lodged. The hut is usually about twenty feet square and ten feet high.

It was in one of these *kashgas* that I had what was perhaps the most interesting experience in connection with the native races that I have had during the years that I have lived in Alaska. I have come in touch with the ceremonies of the natives of many corners of the earth, but this one was unique,—even more so than the celebrated Snake Dance of the Hopi, of Arizona. I had once been able to befriend

a young Eskimo. In gratitude for the favor he invited me to attend a native festival to which (he gave me to understand) no white man had ever been admitted. Whether this meant that no white man had *ever* been admitted or that none had seen the ceremony as indulged in by this particular tribe I am unable to say. Nevertheless I understood that he was attempting to honor me. I confess that it was with some misgivings that I went, but I have never been sorry.

This particular ceremony was known as The Ten Year Festival. Some tribe from another locality is asked to visit the home tribe and the ceremony is held during the visit. The visitors this year came from Unalakleet, bringing large quantities of gifts and many of them going back empty-handed at the end of the festival. "Potlatching," or trading, is the favorite occupation of the Eskimos and many a time have I been a victim. But I usually hastened to "potlatch" whatever I happened to draw off onto some one else at the earliest possible opportunity!

In some respects the Ten Year Festival is not unlike the ceremonies of the American Indians. In the *kashga*, heated to suffocation, the natives and their visitors foregather. A square hole is cut in the floor and a sort of shelf, or bench, runs around the sides of the room. On this bench

sit the principal personages of the tribe, their feet dangling and not infrequently kicking those below them in the face. The "orchestra" with their tom-toms begin their monotonous drumming. The medicine man is heard below chanting a weird tribal song and presently his head appears through the hole in the floor. He comes up, dancing and singing, both song and chant increasing in intensity as he appears. The other members of the tribe join the dance and the song. Their motions become more and more violent. A perspiration which is largely grease, due to the oil which exudes from their skin, rolls from their naked bodies as they writhe and lash themselves into a perfect frenzy. The women join the dance, cavorting about unclothed, just as the men do.

The final episode of the ceremony occurs when the medicine man breaks from the *kashga* and runs outside in the bitter cold. Of course, everything is frozen tight, but a hole is cut in the Bay and into the ice-cold water he plunges, returning to the *kashga* dripping wet. He then tells them that he has been in consultation with the Great Spirit, or whatever it is that they call their ruling power, and that he has been instructed to tell them that the crops will be good, the furs plentiful, that they will be successful in catching the walrus and the seal.

I have already spoken of the unusual custom of the trial marriage which exists among the natives of the Far North. So far as I know, it exists nowhere else,—at least under supervision of the church. But when the United States purchased Alaska there was a paragraph in the treaty which read as follows:

“The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years, but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory they, with the exception of the uncivilized tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyments and all the rights, advantages and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the full enjoyment of their liberty, property and religion. The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country.”

The supposition is that the “laws and regulations” were not immediately forthcoming and that gradually the natives came under the influence of the Greek Catholic Church. The trial marriage is a blending of the customs of both of these.

I presume that there is no other place in the

world where the natives approach more nearly to living in a state of nature than here. This applies as much to their family life as to their out-door existence. In former times when the Eskimo man and woman decided that they would like to wage the war of life together, to combine against their implacable foes, the cold, the storm and the darkness, they just went ahead and did it. This was and in many cases still is the beginning and the end of the subject of marriage with them. The native custom in the olden days was a somewhat strenuous experience for the bride. It is still followed, but it has now become a mere ceremony, quaint and picturesque. The young Eskimo seldom "falls in love." He selects a wife, usually choosing her for her health and strength. In the olden days, having picked her out, he would lie in wait for her, seize her by the hair of her head and drag her off to his igloo, the whole family following and (apparently) attempting to rescue her. Strangely enough, his choice was not always the young girl. There was a lively competition for widows, especially if they were the mothers of sons who would be able to help bring in the whale and keep the wolf from the door.

Of Eskimo morality and civilization there are many degrees. Some of the tribes as yet un-



touched by the influence of the missionaries have moral laws of extreme refinement. And they live up to them! Do you know of another spot on earth where *both man and woman* who have proved guilty of unfaithfulness are meted out the same punishment? I do not. But the reindeer Koriaks, one of the tribes not far from Nome, place the greatest stress upon loyalty and chastity of both man and woman, and the punishment for both, when they transgress the law, is instant death!

As to many of the tribes, however, little can be said and that little is not to their credit. They have no higher conception of life than that which is wholly animalistic. Through all the long ages, with them a physical act has been merely a physical act. It has had no moral significance. And can the idea of untold ages be easily eradicated? And, after all, are they worse than other people? Comparisons are odious. But it must be remembered that these natives live out their lives thus *thinking no evil!* What, then, of the white man, born with the knowledge of the moral significance which is attached to the personal relationship and who has permitted himself to become degraded by the vices of civilization? The native man is *unmoral*. The white man is *immoral*. There is a difference! Moreover, the

Scarlet Letter is not alone for the Hester Prynnes of Old Plymouth. From time immemorial among some of the tribes of the North the unchaste Eskimo woman has been forced to wear a sign of her degradation,—a green band in her hair. However, unlike Hester Prynne, she is given another chance, albeit an unfair one. If she gives birth to an able-bodied boy she becomes an object of unusual and sincere respect and her green band becomes, as it were, a crown.

Humanity itself, in the Far North, sometimes becomes quite as cold and frozen as the land itself. But there is one thing which never fails to thaw it,—children. And any one who lives long in the north country can not but realize that children are of vital necessity in any sparsely-settled land. The Reverend Hudson Stuck, to whose admirable volume, *Voyages on the Yukon*, reference has already been made, relates a good story bearing on this point. Long residence in Alaska has taught him much that has never yet been writ in books and has made of him, although a man of the strictest religious convictions, kindly tolerant of the frailties of humankind. Above all else, he is impatient, as we all are, of the non-essentials in education which are being crammed down the throats of the natives by teachers, often due to youth and

inexperience, while the essentials, the things of real value to them as individuals and to the country as a whole, are neglected. The Archdeacon relates that once he visited a Mission where the man in charge, a youth, with misguided enthusiasm, boasted that there was neither a half-breed nor an illegitimate child in the village! The Archdeacon received the information in silence, but after a tour of inspection he returned to the subject.

"I see no children at all," he remarked. "Aren't there any?"

The young man proudly admitted that there were none,—whereupon the Archdeacon proceeded to shock him.

"I much prefer half-breed children or even illegitimate children to no children at all!" he said. "By the grace of God, much may be done with the half-breed or even the illegitimate child. But in the name of all that is hopeless and preposterous," he finished, "what can ever be accomplished in a country where there are *no children at all?*"

It has always been a matter of real regret to me that the Archdeacon did not record the answer to his question!

Just when the custom of the trial marriage in its present form originated I do not know.

That it must have entered with or at least followed closely in the wake of the Greek Catholic Church is undeniable. As was the case with the native ceremonies of the American Indians,—the Sun Dance, the Ghost Dance, the Flute Dance and the Snake Dance—*religious* ceremonies, every one of them, exaggerated and highly-colored reports of which were carried to the government by over-enthusiastic and sometimes fanatical missionaries and agents with the result that the government took steps to suppress them, the trial marriage of the natives of Alaska, while not yet suppressed, now rests under official displeasure. A part of my duty was to investigate this subject. I did so—with a result more astonishing to myself than it could possibly have been to any one else. Like the man of old who went to the temple to scoff and remained to pray, I issued forth from this investigation with most of my preconceived theories on the subject knocked galley-west. Some of my hitherto staunchest principles, if not quite broken, were so badly bent that I have never yet been able to hammer them out quite straight again!

I had it out one day with Father B——, a priest of the Greek Church, a benevolent and kindly old man who in the early days of his mission among the Eskimos had cherished a dream

of them as a separate people,—a race apart, who should work out their own salvation with the *assistance* (not the *insistence*) of a wisely directed form of religion. That dream for a while promised to be realized, at least to a certain extent. But with the coming of the first white men, most of whom were utterly lawless, he saw his vision fade and finally vanish. Nevertheless he worked on and the trial marriage is his solution of the problem. It is a sort of welding of the customs of both the native and the church.

There is one point in regard to the custom on which I wish to be plainly understood. In Alaska it is against the law for an unmarried man and woman to live together. To say that the custom exists with the *consent* of the Church is wholly unfair. Every one who has lived in such a country as this knows very well that many of the customs as well as the laws are born of necessity, and the custom of the trial marriage is unquestionably one of these. It certainly exists with the *knowledge* of the Church and its origin undoubtedly lies in this fact: The parishes over which one priest has jurisdiction lie far apart. A visit to each of them is possible only about once a year. Without the Church there would be *no* marriage, even a belated one. Not infrequently it happens that a young Es-

kimo who wishes a wife goes to the priest and asks his assistance in finding one. The girl may (and often does) live in one parish and the young man in another. He will either go to her home or she will go to his. But they can not be married until the next visit of the priest which is sometimes a whole year later.

Before the priest will consent to assist the youth in finding a suitable companion, however, he makes certain requirements which the young man must meet. He must build an igloo, furnish it and stock it with supplies. He must then construct his boat in order that he may fish and thus make a living for them both. This done he may have his girl. *Score one in favor of the trial marriage!* He may *not* have her unless he is prepared to house and support her. When his igloo and boat are complete the young people go to the new home and live together for one year. At the end of the year, however, they must be married by the ceremony of the Church. If they do not come to him to be married the priest seeks them out and forbids them to live together any longer.

While the idea itself rather sticks in one's throat, the thoughtful man can not deny that the trial marriage has much to recommend it. They who have come most closely in touch with it, the

missionaries and priests, say that it is indeed seldom that the couple fail to return at the end of the year to be married. When they do, it is asserted, there is usually a reason, and when this reason exists, they claim, it is far better for them to separate. The year of trial has proved that they are not suited to each other. If a child has come to them, the mother takes it and goes back to her people, and both the man and woman may select another mate and enter into another compact if they desire. But this seldom happens.

I argued the question to a finish with Father B——. He could not be moved from his position and in the end I could but acquiesce in much that he said. How much better this system is than that which prevails under the stress of our present day civilization! In the rapid and feverish life of the cities of the world to-day,—what happens? The lover and his lass during the period of courtship put forth their whole stock of attractiveness. Seeing each other periodically it is quite simple to keep out of sight one's faults and weaknesses. No sooner are they married than the hitherto concealed frailties begin to appear. Then——. They realize that there exists a *bond* between them and more often than not, like a dog straining at his leash, they endeavor to

find out just how elastic the tie is,—just how far they can strain or stretch it. First arguments, then differences, then quarrels. Before they know it the cord snaps. Life is never the same again. Lovers' quarrels may be made up. Family quarrels never! What then? Nine times out of ten, for social or economic reasons, they go on living together, ekeing out an unhappy and often tortured existence. What could be worse? That which (for lack of a better term to apply to it) we call the social evil is not confined to the scarlet woman of the streets. It often exists in the best families of the land!

Among these people of the Northland, however, it is different. Both the youth and the maiden know very well that at the end of the year there is a possibility of either leaving the other. The result of this knowledge is that from the very first they fall into the habit of trying to please each other! And it is a habit they seldom outgrow. If they find that they can *not* please each other they are privileged to separate,—in fact, are required to do so. They are not permitted to remain together quarreling all their lives and ruining the family life of the children who come to them. This, in my judgment, explains the light-heartedness of the Eskimos. They are a happy people and the parents never



punish the children. Domesticity counts for much among them. Home is sanctuary from the elements. They have little else,—but they have each other! The manner in which they are forced to live for so many months of the year, so closely confined, draws them very closely together. I question whether what they lack, or what we imagine they lack, does not matter less than we think. To me it seems that they miss little of life's essential meaning. They do not have much, it is true. They are often ill-fed. They are not intellectual. They are not sentimental. They are just human! And although they may be for months shut in by the icy blasts of winter they do not complain. Why? Because no cold can penetrate the inner glow and warmth which is born of an adequate comradeship!

The trial marriage permits the indulgence in one of their quaintest of customs. No Eskimo maiden ever accepts a proposal of marriage. Indifference to the attention of her admirer is the acme of good form! I find that "keeping up appearances" is characteristic of humanity whether the latter dwell on Greenland's icy mountain or India's coral strand! And propinquity is and ever has been the most prolific parent of love—at either the North Pole or the Equator. The "force" with which the Eskimo youth of to-

day seizes his bride by the hair to "drag" her off to his igloo is altogether counterfeit, as is also the attempt on the part of her family to "rescue" her. It is merely the indulgence in one of their most ancient customs.

I have been much among the natives,—especially those who abide on my island, and because of what I have seen of their family life I am almost a convert to the system. As a rule the Eskimo makes a good husband, willing to perform any labor, endure any hardship or suffer any deprivation in order to procure food for his wife and children. Many an Arctic man of my acquaintance has died for his family, and I am often reminded when I think of them of the familiar lines:

"All love that hath not friendship for its base  
Is like a mansion built upon the sand!  
Love, to endure life's sorrow and earth's woe,  
*Needs friendship's solid masonry below!*"

It is said that some one once asked Diogenes this question:

"At what age is it best for a man to marry?"

With the classical brevity of the Greeks he replied:

"In youth it is too soon,—in age too late!"

I disclaim any intention of offering a treatise on the subject of marriage, but the investigation

of this custom of the natives unquestionably gave me a huge jolt! It turned my thoughts into a channel which otherwise I might never have had occasion to explore. Would that I could chart it! If only we could bring ourselves to regard marriage as a profession and would set ourselves in a business-like way to excelling in it! Could it in any way detract from its dignity? Or its sacredness? Surely not. Medicine and surgery are professions. The Law is a profession, and the Church. Diplomacy, legislation and arms are professions. Marriage is the greatest of all professions,—and the most difficult of any to master! One may master to a degree which may be regarded as little short of perfection the other professions,—music, art, oratory, etc. What man of to-day has the conceit to regard himself as a well-nigh perfect husband?

That the rewards of marriage are incomparable is undeniable. Life's journey, at best, is lonely. No man can deny that even though his daily task may take him amidst the crowd he lives the greater part of his life alone! A dear and close companionship is all that makes life tolerable. Nothing else ever has, will or can. Fame is a delusion and a snare. Ambition is a disease. Affectionate companionship and a home are the only things worth having. Why not build a

*home* instead of a house? Why not go about the process in a business-like way? Why not make honor and loyalty fashionable and permit faithlessness to go out of style?

One of America's foremost writers declares repeatedly throughout his excellent novels that judgment has never yet entered into the selection of a mate,—that sentiment and emotion alone decide the after life of every couple who are wed. This is, unfortunately, true except in rare cases. None would care to abolish wholly the electrical current which flashes between the sexes. And yet——. Marriage entered into from a sense of duty on both sides is not without its strong argument. He who undertakes marriage because he regards it as both a duty and a privilege, or solely from a sense of duty, who either actively or passively selects a mate for no other reason, is very likely because of that same sense of duty to fulfill his obligations faithfully and to behave well. Nothing in all the earth is quite so fine as an active conscience! For such a man life reserves some of her grandest hours. The Golden Apples do not grow so far above the heads of any of us that we can not reach out and gather them if we try! And he who follows the path of duty will find his own apple quite as

luscious and sweet at the core as that of him who trod the flowery road of personal pleasure!

I am one of those who hope that with the end of the great World War a new spirit of tolerance may spread its white wings over all the world and that sooner or later some of the time-worn social rules and regulations, archaic because designed for a civilization two thousand years ago, may be abrogated or at least amended and modified. May the day come when life shall be individual, when creed and dogma shall be buried in a grave so deep that there shall be no possibility of a Resurrection! When that nameless and indefinite thing known as Public Opinion shall be forced to lower its threatening finger and lose its power! When all men and all women shall enjoy the privilege of working out, each for himself and herself, that most potent factor in the human experience, namely, the personal relationship, and when we shall all live saner, cleaner, healthier, happier and *more moral* lives in consequence!

Dr. William H. Dall, Paleontologist of the United States Geological Survey and Honorary Curator of Mollusks at the National Museum at Washington, D. C., has written the following charming verses about the natives of Alaska.

“Innuït” is the name by which the Eskimo calls himself and his people from Greenland to Mt. St. Elias. The *topek* is the winter house of turf and walrus hide. In the igloo, or snow house, there is no wood. All Innuït believe in evil spirits which are supposed to dwell far inland, away from the shores. In times of starvation Innuït ethics permit a mother to put her baby, when she can no longer feed it, out in the snow to die. The child’s mouth must be stuffed with mud or grass. Otherwise its spirit will return and be heard crying about the house at night.

#### THE SONG OF THE INNUIT

O, we are the Innuït people,  
 Who scatter about the floe  
 And watch for the puff of the breathing seal  
 While the whistling breezes blow.  
 By a silent stroke the ice is broke  
 And the struggling prey below  
 With the crimson flood of its spouting blood  
 Reddens the level snow.

O, we are the Innuït people,  
 Who flock to the broken rim  
 Of the Arctic pack where the walrus lie  
 In the polar twilight dim.  
 Far from the shore their surly roar  
 Rises above the whirl  
 Of the eager wave, as the Innuït brave  
 Their flying lances hurl.

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O, we are the Innuït people  
Who lie in the topek warm;  
While the northern blast flies strong and fast  
And fiercely roars the storm;  
Recounting the ancient legends  
Of fighting, hunting and play,  
When our ancestors came from the southland  
tame  
To the glorious Arctic day.

There is one sits by in silence  
With terror in her eyes,  
For she hears in dreams the piteous screams  
Of a cast-out babe that dies—  
Dies in the snow as the keen winds blow  
And the shrieking northers come,—  
On that dreadful day when the starving lay  
Alone in her empty home.

O, we are the Innuït people,  
And we lie secure and warm  
Where the ghostly folk of the Nunatak  
Can never do us harm.  
Under the stretching walrus hide  
Where at the evening meal  
The well-filled bowl cheers every soul  
Heaped high with steaming seal.

The Awful Folk of the Nunatak  
Come down in the hail and the snow,  
And slash the skin of the kayak thin  
To work the hunter woe.  
They steal the fish from the next day's dish  
And rot the walrus lines—  
But they fade away with the dawning day  
As the light of summer shines.

O, we are the Innuít people  
Of the long, bright Arctic day,  
When the whalers come and the poppies bloom  
And the ice-floe shrinks away;  
Afar in the buoyant umiak  
We feather our paddle blades  
And laugh in the light of the sunshine bright,  
Where the white man's schooner trades.

O, we are the Innuít people  
Rosy and brown and gay;  
And we shout as we sing of the wrestling ring  
Or toss the ball at play.  
In frolic chase we oft embrace  
The waist of a giggling maid  
As she runs on the sand of the Arctic strand  
Where the ice-bears bones are laid.

O, we are the Innuít people,  
Content in our northern home;  
Where the kayak's prow cuts the curling brow  
Of the breakers snowy foam.  
The merry Innuít people,  
Of the cold, gray Arctic sea,  
Where the breathing whale, the Aurora pale  
And the snow-white foxes be.

There is a diversity of opinion as to the ultimate fate of the native races of the earth. To my mind there is but one answer. Search the wide world over to-day and where will you find a wilderness? There are none which the aggressive white man has not penetrated. And wherever the white man enters the native man begins



to disappear. It has always been so, and it always will be so.

If only the white man would let them alone! Is it not better to have the vast Arctic spaces people by a native race than to have it unpeopled by anybody? The Eskimos live where no one else on earth can or will live. They are a picturesque and harmless people. In their struggle for existence they have fought valiantly. Surely they have earned the right to exist unmolested, earned it bravely.

## CHAPTER XVI

### SOCIAL LIFE IN ALASKA

**I** HAVE more than once been forced to endure the suppressed sympathy of friends who live in the Interior because of my enforced residence on St. Michael. It is a sympathy wholly wasted. St. Michael is a bright, clean little place. There are few mosquitoes,—a fact which in itself is a recommendation. Although the temperature is sometimes very low, and although the Arctic winter sends down some terrific blizzards at times, as a rule the short winter days are bright, still and pleasant. If one wishes sport it is right at hand on the mainland,—wild geese, duck, ptarmigan and caribou. There is also salmon fishing.

As a brilliantly-colored thread is sometimes woven into a piece of embroidery I find one vivid memory running through the years I have lived on St. Michael. To me the most wonderful thing in connection with those years is the transformation which takes place each year on the day that the first ship anchors in the Bay. Like the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tale St. Michael suddenly

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wakens from her long winter's sleep. No words can describe that awakening. It must be seen to be appreciated.

When the last boat leaves the island in October almost every one who has been employed there during the summer season returns to the States as there is nothing for them to do here during the long, dark months. When the first boat comes in June, however, laden with tourists, prospectors and business men, they all come back, and the scene which follows their arrival is one that I have never seen equalled elsewhere. I have in mind at this writing two good friends, the men who during the years that I served as United States Commissioner at St. Michael, were responsible for this transformation. When one remembers that fifty thousand people passed through the port of St. Michael during the rush to Nome, it is apparent that theirs was no small task. One of these men was Mr. A. F. Zipf, Traffic Manager of the Northern Navigation Company. The other was S. J. Sanguineti, a splendid son of sunny California. Everything connected with transportation in and out of Alaska was in the hands of Mr. Zipf, while Mr. Sanguineti had charge of the provisioning of hotels and boats, the providing of eating and sleep-

ing accommodations for the many who flocked each summer to the country.

The efficiency displayed by these two men was a thing to create admiration and enthusiasm. Because of Mr. Zipf's capability in managing details, within thirty minutes after the landing every one employed in St. Michael was in his place. The clerk was behind his counter, or back of his desk in an office. The cook was in the kitchen and the laundryman in the laundry. They did not even go first to the rooms which had been engaged for them. Their baggage was placed therein for them and within the hour St. Michael fairly teemed with activity. The men who had just gone to work looked as though they had been there always. In the same deft manner did Mr. Zipf handle the transfer of passengers, baggage and freight (enormous in volume) which passed through the port of St. Michael and went on up the Yukon. Every detail had been carefully worked out before the landing.

In these stirring days of our national life I have thought many times of these two men and wondered that the United States Government has not sought them out for positions of responsibility. Both would be master hands in helping to untangle the complicated mass of detail which now taxes the strength and the ability of our

country. Uncle Sam never had greater need for her men of proved efficiency.

Social life is not wanting in St. Michael, or in any other community in Alaska. We have reached a period in our career where we thoroughly resent being pictured as a collection of wild and lawless mining camps where faro banks, drinking joints and vigilance committees abound. The resident of the Outside, unless forewarned, would open his eyes wide if asked to attend a garden party, or a four o'clock tea, in one of the larger Alaskan towns. Evening dress after six o'clock is not at all unusual for both men and women. The women's clubs are very much alive and engaged in the same activities as those of the States. In fact, one finds in the various sections of Alaska most of the normal manifestations of cultured civilization,—the elements which contribute to the upbuilding of an intelligent, law-abiding commonwealth.

The subject of intemperance in Alaska has been much dwelt upon, and rightly, for it became such a menace to the future development of the country that the Alaskans themselves voluntarily did away with it. It was not forced upon them by any legislation. Formerly liquor played a great part in the life of the country and in this connection, no matter what one's convictions may



**"SCOTTY" ALLEN AND BALDY**



**GENE DOYLE, ONE OF THE OLDEST MAIL CARRIERS ON SEWARD PENINSULA. A HERO OF THE TRAIL!**



**COMING IN TO ST. MICHAEL WITH OUR THIRTY-THREE-DOG TEAM AFTER GOING OUT TO MEET THE MAIL CARRIER**



**DUTCH HARBOR**

be, it must be acknowledged that there were extenuating circumstances. The same is true of the men now in the service in the European War. The soldier who, wounded, has lain on the battle-field eight or ten hours in a driving rain, or all during a chill, frosty night, often has to have a stinging hot stimulant if his life is to be saved. It is not a matter of principle. It is a thing of necessity. What man is courageous enough to take upon himself the responsibility of saying that it shall not be given him? He may never have tasted it before in his life. It was just so with these Alaskan pioneers,—were they not soldiers, too, the advance guard, as it were, of a new civilization? They entered into a bleak and practically unknown land where Nature frowned savagely upon them on every hand. The half-starved, half-frozen, not-sufficiently-clad follower of the trail had to keep life in him some way while he made those first long, hard journeys through a practically unpeopled land. It was not always possible to have fire. So his flask was often his salvation. But liquor came to be the curse of Alaska and now the country, of its own volition, has gone “bone-dry.” The only business which has now no chance of succeeding in Alaska is the saloon.

Not a great while ago an Alaskan Carrie Na-



tion broke forth from the ranks of patient and long-suffering women and did some effective work. She lived at *Mile Twenty-three and a Half*, the other name of which village is *Roosevelt*. It is a station between Seward and Anchorage on the new government railroad. Her real name is Mrs. Dabney and she does not in the least enjoy being regarded as the prototype of her belligerent sister from Kansas, U. S. A. In fact, her method is different from the original Carrie. She does not harangue on the subject, neither does she go forth with an ax and smash saloons. Her way is just to remark quietly that "she won't stand for it!"

Anchorage was a tiny village until they began building the railroad. Then before anyone knew it it became a bustling town of eight thousand. The government made it a prohibition town, announcing that drinking among the employees would not be tolerated and that liquor should not be sold at the road houses. Now, having had some experience in this line, I am convinced that nowhere else in the world (with the possible exception of the Foreign Legion) can so many different types of men be found as in a railroad construction gang or a lumber camp! And there were all kinds at *Mile Twenty-three and a Half*!

Mrs. Dabney was a fine housekeeper and cook.

She saw no reason why she should not make the best of her ability in this line so she established herself in a square log house and often fed from seventy-five to a hundred men a day and gave sleeping quarters to as many as the house would accommodate. As has been said, she let it be known that there would be no drinking because "she just wouldn't stand for it!"

The Fourth of July came along, however, and about twenty-five of the men decided that they would celebrate the event. They proceeded to collect the ingredients for said celebration, a part of which consisted of a demijohn and several bottles of whiskey. While they were in the midst of their hilarity,—enter Mrs. Dabney! She ordered the "boss" (who, by the way, was her employer!) to his room. In fact she escorted him thither and locked him in after telling him to go to bed. Then she went back down stairs, gathered up the bottles and the demijohn and threw them into Lake Kenai. When she returned she said quietly that she had no intention of cleaning up after a lot of drunken men, that the government had forbidden drinking and that not one of them could ever come to her table again. The men departed without argument. The next day, however, headed by the "boss," they returned. They stated in the outset that they had not come

to ask her to take them back but merely to express their regret,—that she was quite right in refusing to be bothered with a crowd of men who would not obey the law.

This act is characteristic of Alaskan men. I know no corner of the earth where a good woman is held in higher esteem. The men themselves are often unconscious of this characteristic, but it crops out in their little mannerisms. For instance, there are two ways of addressing a woman in Alaska. As one writer has already expressed it, "We call one kind of woman by her first name and don't know that she has any other. But the other kind of woman,—we call her *Mrs.*! And we don't know whether she has a first name or not!"

It was so with this woman. Neither miner, traveler, trader, workman nor wayfarer ever thinks of calling her other than Mrs. Dabney. But my experience is that there is no straighter way to a woman's heart than a manly and sincere apology! So, in this case, when she said quietly to the men that she had tried to give them good, clean food to eat and a comfortable place to sleep, that all she asked of them was that they obey the rules and not make her work more difficult or more disagreeable than was necessary, she made friends of those men forever. They respected

her because they realized that she herself respected the law and stood for its enforcement. Finally she permitted them to return, but she ended the interview by saying:

"You needn't think you can fool me, either. Any time one of you brings whisky into this house I can find it. More than that," she finished, "B—— says to-morrow is his birthday and he's going to celebrate. But he ain't,—even if he is the Mayor of Roosevelt!"

The men of Alaska, while they admit that the free use of liquor was once almost a necessity in the country, see no reason why it should be so now. Civilization has brought with it other and better means of keeping warm and in good spirits. Like many another thing of this twentieth century it has outlived its usefulness. There are comfortable homes in all the populated sections of Alaska now,—homes where one sees just what he would find anywhere else in the world. Social intercourse and family life are the same here as elsewhere. There is tennis. There is golf. There are music and dancing, and a "chummy" feeling seems to possess all the occupants of the land. There is a general impression that life in a thinly-populated country is not conducive to sociability. I have never found it so. There is a *bon camaraderie* in Alaska that I have found no-

where else in the world. Perhaps it is of a brand not to be found except in the far spaces of the universe!

There is one Great Day in Alaska,—the day when the ice goes out of the Bay in the spring! There is something about the sight and sound of *flowing* water which moves one strangely after nine long months of the “still” cold. One relaxes unconsciously from a tenseness which until that moment he has not realized has possessed him and in this connection I would relate a bit of personal experience.

Life here, as elsewhere, seems to take on new meaning in the springtime. Merry boating or sailing parties are one of the favorite amusements of the Alaskan summer. One evening,—it was the day that the ice went out of the Bay,—I made one of a jolly party which went sailing. The presence of an Army Post always adds to the social life of any community, large or small, and stationed at St. Michael at this time was an officer whose heroism and self-control saved the lives of all but two of our party of eight. Captain Peter Lind was in charge of the boat. We had known him long as an able seaman and therefore put ourselves and our ladies into his keeping without the least thought of possible disaster. From the Fort were two officers, Lieutenants

Wood and Pickering. The other members of the party were Dr. and Mrs. McMillan, Mr. and Mrs. Bromfield and myself. When we were well out from shore the boat suddenly capsized. Before we realized that anything was happening we were in the water. The water was very cold, but the men were good swimmers, and we managed to get a hold on the capsized boat. We were all clinging to it when without the slightest warning over it went again. The hour that followed was one which no member of that little party will ever forget. Captain Lind disappeared. But the magnificent cool-headedness of Lieutenant Wood caused the rest of us to put up a stiff fight and resolve to die game if we had to. Finally after a battle which reduced the strongest of us to utter exhaustion we had the satisfaction of seeing six of our little party safely ashore. Mrs. Bromfield and Captain Lind were lost. And the getting to land was by no means the least thrilling part of the experience. The Eskimos on the shore heard our calls, and although their little boats had not been used all winter and were in need of repairs, they launched them quickly and came to our aid. The boat in which I came in took water badly. But one sturdy little Eskimo baled industriously while the other rowed.

I once heard an old Frenchman singing a song

about the wind in the springtime. It ran like this:

"Le vent que traverse la montagne  
M'a rendu fou!"

(The wind which crosses the mountain  
Has driven me mad!)

Each member of our little party realized that Captain Lind could not have been himself at the moment of our disaster. The winter had been very severe and I have frequently wondered whether the sight of the Bay which for so long had been solid ice and had then so quickly melted into beautiful, sparkling, *moving* water,—just as a lovely woman sometimes gives way suddenly to tears,—had not been the strongest element in his sudden mental undoing.

Civilization follows the flag wherever it goes. Army men are splendid the world over, a fact formerly realized by the few but which is now being driven home to the many by the great war. And the Army women——. They are such "good fellows!" They, too, go with the flag to make a home for their soldier husbands. And they care not a whit whether they follow them into the sands of the desert or over the Arctic snows!

I can not leave the story of St. Michael without reference to Gene Doyle, the oldest mail car-

rier in our part of the country. Have you ever thought what it means to be a mail carrier in Alaska? These men are the real heroes of the trails. Over in the Canadian Yukon they tolerate no such inhumane treatment of men. There no man may take out a horse or a dog if the mercury registers lower than forty-five below zero unless it is a case of life or death and even then one must get permission from the Northwest Mounted Police. But the American mail man *must* go,—or lose his job! Many a time has Doyle set forth with the temperature at sixty below, and you may rest assured that if he did not show up on schedule time we made ready our sleds and went out to meet him! There is no resident of Alaska who is not in sympathy with the Rev. Hudson Stuck who has more than once expressed an ardent longing to serve as Postmaster General for just one week!



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PRIZE OF THE PACIFIC

**A**SIDE from our interests which are now bound up in the great war there is no problem confronting the United States which is so vital as that of Alaska and the Pacific Coast. Separated as she is from the motherland by a foreign country, the shipping to and from Alaska is the most important thing to be considered. True, two of her river systems furnish five thousand miles of navigable water, but in winter they are choked with ice and the country is as yet painfully short on railroads! The Pacific Ocean is the great problem of the American people to-day and Alaska is the prize beyond compute of the Pacific Coast.

It is high time that the American people and the United States Government as well rubbed their eyes and awakened to a fact long known to the few of us who have been on guard. The cards were shuffled some time ago and are just lying, waiting to be dealt in the greatest game that has ever been played! Before the war we

used to hear much talk about the "control of the seas." How many of us realized what that expression meant? The war has opened our eyes. Who is it that has the shuffled cards lying ready? Who is it that *wants* the Pacific? The answer is ready and instant. *Japan!*

Every school boy knows that the United States owns the Aleutian Islands. He knows also that they stretch all the way across to Asia and separate Bering Sea from the Pacific. In this group of Islands is one which has an ice-free front. It is called Dutch Harbor. It would prove an excellent base, if properly fortified, in the control of the Pacific Ocean. Out of our hands Dutch Harbor would be just as effective a barrier *against* us as Gibraltar now is against Spain! In time of war a naval enemy would have a good chance of beating us to Dutch Harbor and accomplishing what we, with a lack of foresight have failed to do,—bar the way to Alaska to us forever after.

Why the seriousness of this has not been realized by the government is inexplicable. Alaska is our most valuable possession. It is not mere womanish fear which forces us to recognize that we are in danger of losing her. There can be no question that in the event of a struggle for the possession of the Pacific the fate of Alaska will

be exactly that which befell Korea in the Manchurian war of a decade or two ago. Nor is this all. Who can sit still at this very moment and see the Japs pushing eastward through Siberia without apprehension?

A hostile fleet in Dutch Harbor and Alaska will fall of her own weight! The distance to Dutch Harbor is just the same from Yokohama as it is from San Francisco! Dutch Harbor is to us what Gibraltar was to Spain in the days of the Armada. Shall we, like Spain, fail to realize her value until too late? If so, our experience can not be other than that which befell her. The tremendous significance of our failure to make Dutch Harbor impregnable and impassable will one day stun us. But the great war has forced us into doing what long ago we should have done without being forced. We are feverishly building ships. If we get our great fleet in order, and if we do it *first*, then it may be that the shuffled cards may never be dealt. There may be no game. There are those who never play unless they see the way open to win!

We have another strategic point also. This is Rugged Island, lying in Resurrection Bay. This Bay was so named by the Russians who discovered it on the anniversary of Our Lord's Resurrection. Rugged Island is an easy point of at-

tack and the government has recently appropriated seven hundred thousand dollars to fortify it.

No comedy of Æschylus ever equaled a proposition put forth in Congress not long ago by the Hon. Frank O. Smith of Maryland. Under the astounding and absurd title of *Eugenic Peace* he proposed that in the interest of world peace the United States should cede to Canada the southern part of Alaska, known as the Panhandle! This section shuts off a large region of Canada from the sea.

Strangely enough, the proposition secured the support of a number of eminent men (not one of whom, however, had ever been to Alaska) but to one who lives here it is the limit and pinnacle of absurdity. First of all, the business affairs of the people living here are conducted almost wholly with Seattle and San Francisco. Would they consent to such a change? Never! Their business would be paralyzed if turned over to Canada, thereby necessitating the payment of a tariff on their exports. Just think what such a proposition would entail. Fully one-third of the salmon fisheries of the world are in the Panhandle! One of the largest gold mines in the world (the Treadwell, on Douglas Island) is located here. Great forests of timber (to cut

which has been forbidden by the government) cover a large part of the area in question. Here, also, are Juneau, the capital of Alaska; Sitka, the ancient Russian capital; Ketchikan, Wrangell, and many other fishing and trading towns containing more than half the permanent population of the whole of Alaska! Why not present Canada with the northern peninsula of Michigan, or the tip of the State of Washington?

There is no doubt that Canada would be glad to arrange things so that her traffic with the Yukon might be carried on without the payment of tariff duties. Well, there is a remedy, but it does not lie in the transfer of territory. It lies in reciprocity of trade,—if not reciprocity, then *free* trade to and from the Yukon and Skagway, its natural seaport. But the idea of ceding the whole country in order to accommodate the residents in the much less important part of the Yukon is a proposition about which it is difficult to be serious! What a joke the United States would be playing upon herself!

For a long time after the historic days of "Fifty-four forty or fight" there was much argument over the boundary of Alaska. It culminated in 1898, however, in the decision of the Lord Chief Justice of England, Lord Alverstone, that the contention of the American members of

the Commission (Elihu Root, Henry Cabot Lodge and Ex-Senator Turner) was correct and should be sustained. This decision gave to the United States complete control of the seacoast and all the bays and channels opening into it. And it is a control it behooves us to keep! But the greatest need of Alaska to-day is a railroad running *into* the country by means of which troops could be sent from the United States. This road would have to run through Canada, and here again is a problem for the statesmen of our country to ponder over *and solve!*

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ALASKA AND THE WAR

**A** WIRELESS message flashed the news to Alaska that our country had entered the war. The effect was the usual one,—the one to which we in Alaska have become accustomed. It aroused a patriotism which was both ideal and practical. It is said that the man who went farthest to serve his colors was a man from Iditarod. A man with his dog team drove by his dwelling and told him the news. Like Israel Putnam of Revolutionary fame who left his team standing in the field where he was ploughing and went to join the Minute Men, so this man laid aside his work and journeyed a thousand miles on a dog sled to enlist!

Every line of industrial, engineering, mining, agricultural and fishing activity immediately was speeded to the top notch of energy and production. The coal output increased from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand tons. Fish food products jumped from twenty to forty-two million dollars. There was an increase of twenty-

two million pounds of canned salmon shipped to the United States over the output of 1917.

The people of Alaska are hardy. They are patriotic. They are energetic and practical. They understand fully what war means. They know that although far removed from the scene of activity they are called upon to help win the war just as much as if they were fighting in the trenches. They know that the greatest good they can do their country is to feed her fighting men. So they went about it in a business-like manner. The result is that theirs is a practical, *organized* patriotic coöperation. Many of the pioneer gold seekers are now transformed into farmers. The potato crop for this year is two thousand tons,—only one item, but a significant one.

The Alaskan women, as always, came straight to the front. With that practical knowledge born of residence in such a country as Alaska they eliminated the sentimental and went to work at those things which America asks and expects of her women. Mrs. Thomas J. Donahoe, of Valdez, who is also President of the Federation of Women's Clubs, was appointed Chairman of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, and the Red Cross is represented and practically managed in almost every locality in the territory. When the first Liberty Loan was



floated the response of Alaska was instant and generous and the same is true of the succeeding loans.

In connection with the part Alaska is playing in the great struggle I revert once more to the subject of the dogs. Our hearts were touched when we learned that they, too, had been awarded the *Croix de Guerre* by the French Government, the Cross having been sent to Mrs. Esther Birdsall Darling who owned and sold many of them to France. "Scotty" Allen took them over and left them there to do their "bit."

It was a French Reserve Officer, a mining engineer, Lieutenant René Haas, who first called the attention of the French Government to the services which could be rendered by the dogs. Mrs. Darling, good patriot that she is and ever ready to promote the cause of the Allies, promptly offered the best that the Darling-Allen kennels afforded. Lieutenant Haas was commissioned to select them. He chose twenty-five of the youngest, swiftest and best bred of these kennels. Then, supported enthusiastically by Captain Moufflet, who also knew the possibilities of the Alaskan dog service, the interest of their superior officers was aroused and Lieutenant Haas was ordered to go to Nome, there to select and purchase a hundred or more suitable for duty

in the Vosges. "Scotty" Allen was persuaded to go to France with the dog contingent and the number was augmented by others from Canada and Labrador. When he and Lieutenant Haas sailed they had four hundred and fifty splendid dogs with them,—half a regiment! All were successfully delivered at the front where they have rendered distinguished and valuable service.

He would indeed be dead to emotion who could read the report which came with the *Croix de Guerre* and which was sent from headquarters on the French frontier to far-away Alaska. We all knew that the dogs would meet emergencies boldly, no matter what the circumstances, the conditions or the weather. One specific incident which will be a part of Alaska's written history when the war is over serves to emphasize and justify our faith in them.

From a lonely post out on the frontier in the French Alps came to headquarters a most urgent call for help. They were out of ammunition and the situation was most critical. True to their reputation for valor the French were holding the post, fighting against heavy odds, each man saying in his heart the little sentence which has become the slogan of the French army and the prayer of every man, woman and child in France,

—“*They shall not pass!*” To hold the post longer, however, meant that ammunition *must* be forthcoming at once. A terrific blizzard was in progress. The trails were dangerous, almost obliterated in places. Trucks and horses were of no avail. But there were the dogs,—Alaska’s heroes. To them France turned in her emergency. The sleds were quickly loaded. The Malamuts fell to harness instantly on command. Lieutenant Haas was ready for his perilous journey. A crack of the whip, an encouraging shout to the dogs and they were off. For four days and four nights they kept their steady gait. Up and down precipitous mountain-sides, over treacherous trails and across the snow-buried expanse, most of the time under shell fire from the enemy, they went quietly, steadily on. Lieutenant Haas acknowledged that the dogs seemed to realize quite as clearly as he did himself the necessity of haste and a cool head, that they had in their eyes the “do-or-die” look which he had so often seen in the eyes of his men. And every one who knows anything about them knows how much victory means to a Malamut.

On the morning of the fifth day, just at dawn, they reached the post,—one more instance of a dramatic arrival in the nick of time. The ammunition was now completely exhausted. One

needs not a vivid imagination to hear in fancy the ringing cheers which greeted them. A pronounced trait of the Alaskan dog is glory in victory, mourning in defeat. This has been observed many times in the races,—the downcast, dejected air of the dogs that fail, the brisk and happy attitude of those that win. So in this instance, the cheers and the Cross were but episodes. The victory was the thing!

The French Government acknowledges that the dogs are quite as valuable as any other branch of the service and those that made this hard and perilous trip are to be painted and hung in the War Museum in Paris.

Mrs. Darling and "Scotty" are and have every reason to be proud of their dogs. In the din of battle and the precariousness of life on the frontier they doubtless miss their owners' kindness and attention. But the sympathies of the latter go with them wherever they go. Lieutenant Haas declares that these dogs have a "college education" and can be trusted to do their work intelligently and fearlessly. When the time comes for the history of the Great World War to be written, may the deeds of the dogs of Nome who played no less courageous and conspicuous a part than did her men be fittingly inscribed therein!

## CHAPTER XIX

### ALASKAN WRITERS

**I**N addition to her gold and copper, her furs and her fish, (Alaska has produced a crop of writers of more or less importance. By far the truest exponent of the life of the country is Robert Service whose *The Spell of the Yukon* surely breathes the spirit of the land. Service is now an army surgeon in the European war and his latest volume *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man* has added to the reputation he justly enjoys because of the verse which went before it. This little volume is dedicated to the memory of his brother, Lieutenant Albert Service, killed in action,) and the *Foreword* with which the collection opens is well worth quoting:

"I've tinkered at my bits of rhymes  
In weary, woeful, waiting times;  
In doleful hours of battle din  
Ere yet they brought the wounded in!  
Through vigils by the fateful night,  
In lousy barns by candle light;  
In dug-outs, sagging and aflood,  
On stretchers stiff and bleared with blood;

By ragged grove, by ruined road,  
By hearths accurst where Love abode;  
By broken altars, blackened shrines—  
I've tinkered at my bits of rhymes!

"I've solaced me with scraps of song  
The desolated ways along;  
Through sickly fields all shrapnel-sown  
And meadows reaped by death alone;  
By blazing cross and splintered spire,  
By headless Virgin in the mire;  
By gardens gashed amid their bloom,  
By gutted grave, by shattered tomb;  
Beside the dying and the dead,  
Where rockets green and rockets red  
In trembling pools of poisoning light,  
With flowers of flame festoon the night.  
Ah me! By what dark ways of wrong  
I've cheered my heart with scraps of song!

"So here's my sheaf of war-won verse,  
And some is bad, and some is worse.  
And if at times I curse a bit,  
You needn't read that part of it!  
For through it all, like horror, runs  
The red resentment of the guns!  
And you yourself would mutter when  
You took the things that once were men  
And sped them through that zone of hate  
To where the dripping surgeons wait!  
You'd wonder, too, if, in God's sight,  
War ever, *ever* can be right!"

Service is essentially a poet. His novel, *The Trail of Ninety-eight*, well,—we have forgiven

him! It is lurid melodrama and certainly adds nothing to his literary reputation. But none can read *The Spell of the Yukon* without breathing deeply!

“There’s a land where the mountains are nameless  
And the rivers all run God knows where!  
There are lives that are erring and aimless  
And deaths that just hang by a hair!  
There are hardships that nobody reckons,  
There are valleys unpeopled and still!  
There’s a land—oh, it beckons and beckons!  
I want to go back—and I will!”

I have already said that the true story of the Klondike stampede has never been written and perhaps never will be. A great deal was put out under the guise of literature, but it was mere journalistic stuff. It will not endure and should not. Jack London was in Klondike. And he was a born story-teller. He should have written something quite worth while of those stirring days with all the wealth of material which lay about him. But the best he did was *The Call of the Wild* and in it he indulged his love for the romantic to such an extent that you find yourself wondering whether dogs are real dogs and his men real men until in the end you conclude that they are not! His white men are like characters on the stage. And if there are any Indians in



**REV. HUDSON STUCK, ARCHDEACON OF THE YUKON,  
PREACHING WITH INDIAN AND ESKIMO INTERPRETERS**



**INTERIOR OF GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ST. MICHAEL  
BUILT IN 1837**





**FINE OLD NATIONAL HOUSE WITH TOTEM POLES  
NEAR WRANGELL**

Alaska such as he portrayed I have never encountered them. They are absurdly untrue to life. Furthermore, the brutal side of life seems to have had undue attraction for London. It is true that it did exist. But it was not the whole of life in Alaska, by any means, and one sickens of it after continuous reading about it. Rex Beach's stories, *The Spoilers* and *The Silver Horde* (by far his best, in my judgment), are good and typical of the life of the period. Yet one can not read them without a feeling that they, too, leave much to be desired.

The wit, the pathos, the comedies, the tragedies, the sordidness, the heroism of those days! Whose pen could delineate the characters of those who wrought them or adequately describe the country as it was,—and is! It would take the combined genius of a Poe, a Kipling and a Bret Harte to do justice to the subject. Richard Harding Davis was preparing to go to Klondike. Had he carried out his intention it might have been different. But one morning he picked up the morning paper and read therein that the *Maine* had been blown up in Havana harbor. He changed his mind!

I am convinced that the best tales of the land have never been put on paper. These are the stories related at the road-houses, or in the rooms

of the Arctic Brotherhood or some similar gathering-place by those who took part in them. And they usually come out quite by accident. } The participant thinks there is nothing wonderful about them. Some grizzled miner,—Service calls them “the silent men who *do* things,”—will suddenly begin talking, and sometimes the story he tells will beat any that has ever yet found its way into print. Why has no one ever written a steam-boat story? Or a tale of the Arctic Brotherhood? There are material and local color galore for such.

Nearly all Alaskans are familiar with the writings of Samuel Clarke Dunham. He has occasionally burst into verse, and he has a dry humor which is exhilarating. I have already quoted from one of his best known effusions concerning the tundra. Tracking about in the wet Russian moss is often calculated to extract (not painlessly) about ninety per cent of one's enthusiasm! So one day Dunham broke forth in a poem which began thus:

“I've traversed the toe-twisting tundra  
Where reindeer root round for their feed!” etc.

Would that there were some way of gathering together the fugitive stories and poems, replete with wit and humor, with pathos and tragedy, which are a part of Alaska's unwritten history!

Many a time have I been guilty of hanging around a road-house, saloon or "joint" of some kind for no reason on earth except that I knew I should hear a good story or two from some wandering wayfarer who had just come in off the trail. And at such times I have often recalled the familiar song (peculiarly true to life in Alaska) 'the chorus of which runs:

"Sometimes you're glad,  
Sometimes you're sad,  
When you play in the game of life!"

I have heard in these miners' gatherings tales of tragedies almost unbelievable, comedies which would furnish excellent vehicles for the talents of Charlie Chaplin and not a few love stories worthy of a Dickens, a Hugo or a Tolstoi. But they were no sooner told than forgotten as no one was at hand to record them.

I well recall an evening when I joined a group who sat smoking beside a stove in one of the road-houses. There was conversation, but one usually loquacious individual sat silently and smoked his pipe. Whenever he had appeared there before he had always been accompanied by an older man. They seemed inseparable companions. I had a feeling that something tragic had happened and that he would relate it before the evening was over. So I decided to "stick

around.” Presently some one asked him where his partner was. He did not reply immediately, but presently took his pipe from between his teeth and speaking in the vernacular of the country said:

“He won’t be here no more.”

“You mean——?”

“Yep.”

We were all interested immediately but forebore to ask questions. Presently he went on.

“We were just comin’ along the trail. His foot slipped an’ down he went into the crevasse. I hollered down, an’ I heerd him answer. So I climbed down as far as I could, an’ I could see him, an’ talk to him. His face was jammed right in the ice an’ was already freezin’. We couldn’t do nothin’ but just look at each other. Then he says, ‘You might as well go on!’ An’ I says, ‘I’m damned ef I do!’ I untied the packs an’ got all the rope we had, but it wouldn’t reach him. ‘I’ll go git some more rope,’ I says to him, but I knowed it’d be too late. ‘Go on!’ he says. ‘Don’t let the dark git you out here. You can’t do nothin’ fer me! I knowed he was right. But I hated like hell to leave him. I’d ’a stayed ef it’d done any good. But it wouldn’t. To-day I got some more rope an’ went back. But—— The ice down where he was had opened again an’ I

could see straight down fer two hundred feet. He wuzn't there!"

Nobody said anything. He took a few more puffs from his pipe. Then he got up and went out.

I have more than once mentioned the Reverend Hudson Stuck, Archdeacon of the Yukon, author, missionary and first white man to ascend Mt. McKinley. The Archdeacon is known and loved by all who know him, not only for his services but because of his personality and his adaptability to the needs and conditions of the land in which he lives. His books, *The Ascent of Denali*, *Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled* and *Voyages on the Yukon*, are excellent reading, good examples of Alaskan literature and history. The Archdeacon has a sense of humor which makes friends for him wherever he goes, and one evening Gene Doyle, the oldest mail-carrier in our part of Alaska, a hardened traveler of the trails, blew in with a good story. Gene was a sourdough of the most pronounced type. He had wintered many times in Alaska.

When two people meet on the trails each is warned of the other's approach by the actions of the dogs. First the leader and then the rest of the team will begin to bristle and cut antics of various kinds. The usual salutation in Alaska

is not "How are you?" or "Hello!" as might be the case elsewhere. Instead we call out: "How are the trails ahead?" On this occasion Doyle knew by the actions of his dogs that he was about to meet another team. There was a storm in progress and neither man could see the driver of the other team. Doyle had had a particularly difficult day's trip and was a bit out of temper when the driver of the other team thus accosted him:

"Friend, how are the trails ahead?"

"They are the G——d——dest, blank, blank, blankety-blankedest I've ever seen in Alaska!" Doyle replied. "How are they your way?"

"The same!" was the somewhat emphatic response of the gentleman. It was the Arch-deacon!

As I have already said, weather which in lower latitudes would promptly convert one into an icicle has little effect upon one who understands how to prepare for it. With hands and feet warmly protected, with winter underwear and wind-proof outer clothes one can comfortably and successfully "weather the weather!" It is no uncommon experience, however, to meet a man on the trail who sings out to you:

"I say, old fellow,—your nose is frozen!"

"Thanks!" you respond. "So is yours!"

Each will then blissfully apply a little snow to the disabled member and proceed on his way. But there is one other thing which should be rigorously guarded against as it is a painful and distressing experience. This is snow-blindness. The glare on the snow causes the film of the eye to become a water blister, which takes three or four days to heal. One of my most poignant recollections is a three days' siege of snow-blindness, during which I lay helpless in a hut while an old squaw put wet tea leaves on my eyes. Never again!

I have heard that from the fighting men of the allied armies now in Europe have come back some exquisite verse,—such verse as one could not reasonably expect from men of their youth and previous environment. The same may be said of much of the verse of Alaska. The poems of Service and Dunham are well known. But alas, the bulk of the others never saw the light of day in print!

As has been said, however, Alaska is a land of contrasts. Not every one gets the same impression of the same thing! To prove it I quote a poem written by one of the many who did not find in Alaska just what they came to seek. The writer of the verses below was the steward on the *Susie*,—one of the boats which plied the Yukon



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during the gold rush. Evidently his claim proved worthless, or something else went wrong. For he has thus expressed himself:

### AN IMPRESSION OF ALASKA

The Devil in hell, we are told, was chained.  
Thousands of years he thus remained,  
But he did not complain nor did he groan.  
He decided to have a hell of his own  
Where he could torment the souls of men  
Without being chained in a sulphur pen!  
So he asked the Lord if He had any land  
In a clime cool enough for a Devil to stand.  
The Lord said: "Yes—but it's not much use.  
It's called Alaska. It's cold as the deuce.  
In fact, old boy, the place is so bare  
I fear you could not make a good hell there!"

But the Devil said he could not see why;  
He knew his business. He'd like to try.  
So the bargain was made, the deed was given,  
And the Devil took his departure from heaven.

He next appeared in the far, far North,  
Exploring Alaska to learn its worth;  
And he said from McKinley as he looked at the  
truck,

"I got it for nothing,—but still I'm stuck!"

But, oh,—it was fine to be out in the cold!  
The wind blew a gale, but the Devil grew bold,  
And thus on the mountain height he planned:  
"I'll make of Alaska the home of the damned!  
A different place from the old-fashioned hell,  
Where each soul burns in a brimstone cell.

I'll use every means a wise Devil need  
To make a good hell. You bet I'll succeed!"

First he filled the air with millions of gnats.  
Then he spread the Yukon all over the Flats,  
Set a line of volcanos from Unimak Pass,  
And covered the soil with tundra grass.  
He made six months' night—when 'twas sixty  
below,

A howling wind and a pelting snow!  
And six months' day—with a spell now and then  
Too hot for the Devil and all of his men!  
Brought hungry wolves and dogs by the pack  
Whose yells send chills right down your back,  
And as you "mush" o'er the bleak expanse  
The North Wind blows holes in your pants!

But of all the pests the imp could devise  
The Yukon mosquitoes bear off the prize.  
They've a rattler's bite, a scorpion's sting,  
And they measure six inches from wing to wing!  
The Devil said when he fashioned these:  
"One of 'em is worse than a thousand fleas!"

Then, over the mountain and rolling plain  
Where the dew falls soft and there's plenty of rain  
He grew flowers and berries. 'Twas just a bluff!  
The Devil knows how to peddle his stuff!  
And to prove how well he knew the game  
He next proceeded to salt his claim.

He put gold nuggets in all the streams  
To lure men on in dreams! In dreams!  
He hid them deep in the glacial ice,  
As a glittering city hides its vice!  
Then he bade Dame Rumor spread the news  
Throughout all the world to its motley crews

That there was gold in piles and piles,  
 Of every color and in all styles!  
 Then he grinned a grim, sardonic grin,  
 And said: "Now watch the fools rush in!  
 They'll fight for gold. They'll steal and slay!  
 But in the end I'm the one they'll pay!"

'Tis a fine hell this that the Devil owns!  
 Its trails are marked with frozen bones;  
 The wild winds moan over bleak chaparral;  
 'Tis a hell of a place he chose for his hell!

And now you know, should anyone ask you,  
 What kind of a place is our Alaska!

I am convinced that the Alaskans, whether they realize it or not, are poetic and imaginative. All over the country one finds the quaintest of names that have been bestowed upon the various localities by some follower of the trail, prospector, or other traveler. In one's journeyings he will come upon settlements bearing such names as Sunset, Paystreak, Anchorage and Fortymile. There are also the "Isles of God's Mercy" where Henry Hudson found shelter on his last voyage, "Anxiety Point" and "Return Reef" of Sir John Franklin, that Sir Galahad of explorers whose Eskimo name means "the man who does not molest our women." In Bank's Land is "Mercy Bay" and there is also the "Thank God" harbor so named by poor Hall on the *Polaris*.

So, if one could but gather them together, the

poems and songs and pretty names of Alaska, each a part of her real history, it might make a column about three miles long, but—it would be mighty interesting reading!

One has but to glance at the map to see the similarity of the Alaskan coast to that of Norway. Will not the day come when her fiords and mountains, her Northern Lights and Midnight Sun will be as famed in song and story as those of Norway? Surely it will!

## CONCLUSION

In concluding this volume I am reminded of two stories, both of which seem applicable to the subject. One of the quaintest and most interesting characters I ever ran across was a French-Canadian, Captain of one of the boats which plied the Yukon during the summer and in the winter stayed at St. Michael. One day the river, or the boat, or both, behaved badly. So he sang out:

"T'row over the anch'!"

"But, Capitaine," expostulated a sailor, "ze anch' she have no chain òn her!"

The Captain glared at him wrathfully.

"T'row her over any way!" he bawled. "She may help some!"

The second story concerns this same gentleman. When the mail service was established at St. Michael he was told that all he had to do if he wanted a letter was to go up to the window and ask for it. Never having had a letter he thought he would like the experience. So he went and demanded one. The postmaster asked his name.

"Pierre LeGros," he said.

"How do you spell it?" asked the man inside.

This was a poser. Pièrre's knowledge did not extend to orthography. But he was nothing if not adaptable. He eyed the man balefully for a moment and the expression on his face was worth a fortune. It changed slowly from interest to scorn. He straightened himself up as proudly as a king and remarked without the slightest trace of temper:

"Vell,—eef you no can spell Pièrre LeGros zen I zink yo' better sell your damn' post-offees!"

The first of these stories is illustrative of my motive in writing this book. So desirous am I that all men may know our *Land of Tomorrow* as she really is that I have tried to set forth her advantages and her opportunities which lie on every hand only waiting to be grasped. Therefore I hope *she may help some!* Also, I feel that wisdom and thoughtfulness on the part of our government will be necessary in order to protect Alaska. And she must be protected because she can not yet protect herself. If we can not protect her, keep her safe from invasion by a foreign enemy, then again I am one with Pièrre LeGros. We had better sell her!

I am not so pessimistic as to think that such a

thing will happen, however. The United States seldom fails to do the right thing at the right time. Alaska is the first country peopled by a race which has back of it the spirit and the traditions of democracy! It is the last great fertile and temperate land on which western civilization may take a fresh start. The democracy which now exists in Alaska is of the very best brand. It is that of a country which, critical of her own mistakes, is capable of showing the world what she has learned from experience. The distilled experience of America and of the whole world is hers to draw upon. There is no excuse for a repetition of any of the blunders the motherland may have made during the days of her youth and her inexperience.

That the government realizes all this is evident. It was made plain when after a long struggle she saved Alaska's resources from monopoly. Now the problem is to *make sure* that whatever is done in the way of economical development, of building railroads, town sites, schools, public buildings, establishing home government and promoting industrial and agricultural possibilities, shall be done in the right way,—sanely, harmoniously, permanently. Statesmen must be trained for this work and it is a trust which any statesman ought to hold sacred. To build a new civilization! How

splendid a task at which to spend one's working years! Alaska is America's opportunity.

So long as the United States owns Alaska (and may it be always!) she is wealthy. She bought fabulous riches in 1867 for two cents an acre! With a mere handful of adventurous spirits, with no railroads to speak of, Alaska has already shown what she can do. With good transportation, with thriving, teeming, hustling, heavily populated cities,—what will the future reveal? *Read the answer in the history of the American people!*

Time was when the Great West lured all men. Now it is the Great North! The West, that once fabled land of the bad man, the gold mine, the gun fighter and similar attractions, has vanished from our scheme. If there is now a spot in the West which has not passed into the hands of private management, rest assured that it is a spot where nothing but sage brush and jack rabbits will thrive! But the Great North is waiting! And calling! The last frontier! The only territory under the Stars and Stripes where the man without capital has yet a reasonable chance of reaping the reward of his labors. And the North is waiting and calling for *you!*

As I write the closing pages of this book I find that I myself am once more hearing—the Voice!



Is it the same Voice which called me to the Northland some ten years ago? I think so. And never before have I heard it in tones so distinct, so insistent. I have been somewhat critical (justly so, I feel) of the indifference of the government toward the present and future needs of Alaska. But——. Only a few hours ago I donned the most *comfortable* suit of clothes I have ever worn, namely, the uniform of the good old U. S. A. I am for peace,—just so long as there is no legitimate reason for war. But Germany can not step on the tail of my Uncle Sam's coat with impunity!

Would that I were able to put into words a fitting tribute to the staunch friends among whom I have come and gone under almost every conceivable circumstance and condition! To form friendships such as these, cemented by events which can not occur elsewhere, is well worth living for. Whenever my mind reverts to this subject I recall a little stanza which expresses my thoughts far better than I can voice them myself. So, to my friends, the Alaskans, I can only say:

"I have eaten your bread and your salt;  
I have drunk of your water and wine;  
The deaths you have died I have watched beside,  
And the lives that you lived were mine!"









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